

THE

River of Life,

PROCEEDING out of the

THRONE of GOD

And of the

53. 1. 19

L A M B.

A SERMON preached immediately
before the Sacrament of the LORD'S
SUPPER at *Dunfermline* July 6th
1735.

By the Reverend Mr. RALPH ERSKINE Mi-
nister of the Gospel there.



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For All thy Mercies.

January 29 1762

With all thy Mercies O My God
My Pleading Soul I bring
Transported with y^e Sweetest
For Wonder Love & Praise
John D.

MS #8023



The River of Life,

REV. xxii. i.

*And he shewed me a pure River
Water of Life, clear as Crystal,
proceeding out of the Throne of God,
and of the Lamb.*



T the last Sacramental Action that fell to my Share here, I took Occasion to speak of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb in the Midst of the Throne, *Rev. vii. 17.* And now I would speak a little (as the Lord may assist) of the great Blessings that proceed from that Throne, to the everlasting Salvation and Consolation of all the Redeem'd. Some understand all that is said in the two last Chapters of this Book, of the State of the Church even here on Earth, in the Glory of the latter Days; Others view it as a Represent-

perfect and triumphant State of
 Heaven. I reckon it safest to
 of these, and apprehend it takes
 State of the Church, and the
 thereof, commenced in Time here,
 State through Eternity hereafter.
 State begins here, since Grace is
 of Glory, and Glory the Perfecti-
 Now, this happy State is described
 to the earthly Paradise, that was
 the Sin of the first *Adam*, as another, a
 Paradise restor'd by the Righteousness of
 and *Adam*.

In this Verse you see a Revelation made to
 of the River of Paradise; and by this Ri-
 ver I understand the Spirit, and all spiritual
 Blessings: For so I find the Spirit frequently in
 Scripture represented, as a River, or a Flood of
 Water, *Isa. xliv. 3. I will pour Water on him
 that is thirsty, and Floods upon the dry Ground.*
 What is that? Even *my Spirit*, and *my Bless-
 ing*; as it is explain'd in the Words immediately
 following. But then, you have the Quality of
 this River; it is a *pure River of Water of Life,
 clear as Crystal.* All the Streams of earthly
 Comforts are muddy and polluted, and pollu-
 ting; but these are pure, clear, healing and re-
 freshing, giving Life, and preserving Life for
 ever to them that drink thereof. You have the
 Rise of this River, or whence it flows and pro-
 ceeds, namely, *Out of the Throne of God, and
 of the Lamb.* The Spirit, and all the Blessings
 and Comforts of Grace and Glory, proceed from
 a God in Christ. As the Spirit, with Reference
 to his personal Property, proceeds from the Fa-
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ther and the Son ; so, with Reference to his Office in the OEconomy of Redemption, he, as a Spirit of all Grace and Comfort, proceeds like a pure Crystal River out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb ; The Spirit, and all spiritual Blessings, being from God ; through the Mediation of the Lamb. But I shall further explain the Words upon the following Doctrine.

Observe, *That the living Spirit of God, communicating all the Blessings of everlasting Life, graciously here, and gloriously hereafter, proceeds like a pure Crystal River out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb.*

And here I shall, as the Lord may please to assist, (1.) Offer some Remarks for clearing and confirming the Doctrine. (2.) Notice the Property and Quality of the Water of this River. (3.) Shew what may be imported in its being said to proceed out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb. (4.) Whence it is, or the Reason why this River of Life is said to proceed out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb. (5.) Deduce some Inferences for the Application.

First, Some Remarks for clearing and confirming the Doctrine.

1. *Remark.* That Communion with God in Christ in his Blessings and Comforts at his Table, whether above or below, is by the Spirit : For, as *through Christ we have Access to the Father by one Spirit*, Eph. ii. 18. so all the Blessings and

and Comforts of the new Covenant are communicated from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Ghost : And hence we enjoy the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God through him, in the Communion of the Holy Ghost, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

2. *Remark.* That all spiritual Blessings thus communicated are everlasting. They are the Blessings of everlasting Life, begun in Grace here, and consummate in Glory hereafter. God himself, the prime and principal Blessing, is the everlasting God, and the everlasting Light, the everlasting Life, the everlasting Heaven and Happiness of his People. And all the Streams of Blessings that flow from this Fountain of living Waters are everlasting. For Example, Is Peace a Stream of this River ? *Rom. v. 1. Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God.* This Peace is everlasting : And hence departed Saints are said to *enter into Peace* whenever they die, *Isa. lviii. 2.* Peace here enters into them, and there they enter into Peace. Is Pardon of Sin a Stream of this River ? Yea, *we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sin, Eph. i. 7.* and this Pardon is everlasting : And hence 'tis said of the Inhabitants of Heaven, *The People that dwell there shall be forgiven their Iniquity, Isa. xxxiii. last.* Here they are pardoned, and there the Pardon is lengthened out to Eternity. Is Sanctification and Holiness a Stream ? Yea, *beholding his Glory, we are changed into the same Image.* Well, it is an everlasting Blessing, for in Heaven it is perfected, *1 John iii. 2. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* Again, Is the Life of

of Comfort here a Stream? Yea, we joy in God through Christ. This Blessing is everlasting, and therefore called *everlasting Consolation*, 2 Thess. ii. 16. And hence the Comforter is said to *abide in us for ever*, John xiv. 16. Even when the sensible Comfort is withdrawn, yet the Comforter abideth for ever. Again, Is the begun Life of Communion with God a Stream of this River of the Water of Life? What is this Fellowship with the Father and the Son but the Beginning of everlasting Communion? In a Word, Is Grace a Stream of this River of the Water of Life? What is a Life of Grace here, but the Beginning of the Life of Glory, which is everlasting, and commenced whenever the Soul believes in Christ? *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life. This is Life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* Thus you may see what I mean by the Blessings of everlasting Life, to be enjoyed graciously here, and gloriously hereafter, called *the Water of Life* in the Text. And so far I have here designedly prevented myself the Necessity of explaining much further this Water of Life, or the Streams of this River.

3. *Remark* is, That the Spirit of God, as the great Blessing of the Covenant, and all the other spiritual Blessings of everlasting Life, are compared frequently to Water in Scripture, *John* iv. 14. and *10. v.* compared. There Christ is said to give us *living Water*: And again, *The Water that I shall give him that drinketh it, shall be in him a Well of Water springing up to everlasting Life.* And, *John* vii. 37. *If any Man thirst,*

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thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his Belly, out of his very Heart and Soul, shall flow Rivers of living Water. This he speaks of the Spirit. But I insist not upon all the Instances I might offer ; only the Spirit and his Influences, Graces, Comforts and Blessings, may be on many Accounts compared to Water. I insist not upon the Parallel ; only, as Water is for quenching of Thirst, washing off Stains, cooling of Heats, healing of Wounds, softning of hard Earth, and fructifying of barren Earth ; so the Spirit, in his various Influences and Operations, is of manifold such like Use to the Souls of all his People.

4. *Remark* I offer is, That this River of Water of Life, that waters the Church militant and triumphant with all spiritual and everlasting Blessings, proceeds out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb : I mean, the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. Not only doth he so, as he is the Third Person of the glorious Trinity, and that by an eternal and ineffable Procession ; but also, as he is clothed with the peculiar and glorious Office of applying the purchased Redemption, He comes forth from the Father and the Son by a voluntary Subordination. This is plain from several Scriptures, particularly *John xiv. 16. I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth. John xv. 26. When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. John xiv. 26. But the Comforter,*

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forter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all Things. And again, John xvi. 7. If I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will convince the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment. He will guide you into all Truth. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. Whence then shall we have a good Communion this Day? whence shall we have the Spirit, or any spiritual Blessing and Comfort? It is from the Throne of God and of the Lamb; It is from the Father and the Son. This Water is from God, through the Mediation of the Lamb.

The *Second* Thing proposed was, To notice the Qualities of this great Blessing, comprehending all other Blessings of everlasting Life. The Text calls it *a pure River of the Water of Life, clear as Crystal*: Where the Water is described four Ways, namely, from the Plenty, the Purity, the Vertue and the Splendor of it.

1st, 'Tis described from the *Plenty*, and therefore called *a River*. This is that River, *Psal. xlii. 4. the Streams whereof make glad the City of God*. No Pleasures are like these that flow from the Spirit of God. *The Fruit of the Spirit is Peace and Joy*: But here it is only the Streams of this River that we enjoy, but in Heaven the River itself will be enjoy'd. The Holy Spirit is a River, not a Cistern, to shew his infinite Plentitude and Fulness, and the great Abundance of heavenly Blessings that flow from
B him.

him. Our Lord Jesus hath received of this River above Measure, and yet the River is as full as ever. All Believers, in all Ages from the Beginning of the World, Thousands, and Ten Thousands, have drawn out of it; yet it is still an overflowing River. O let us bring all our empty Buckets here! for there is enough here for every Son of *Adam*, if he would come; enough for Time, and enough for Eternity: The River is flowing by our Door; O may we draw Water out of this Well of Salvation.

2dly, It is described from its *Purity*, it is a *pure River*. The Spirit of God is a pure and holy Spirit, and all his Blessings and Comforts are pure and holy, purifying and sanctifying Blessings. A Pool or a standing Water may be impure; but a River, tho' it should run through a lothsom Ditch, will carry away the Pollution of it: No Man's Heart, be it never so polluted like a stinking Ditch, but, if a Stream of this River be let into it, and have a free Passage, it will carry away all the Filth and Pollution thereof. And why is it said of Heaven, *Rev. xxi.* last, in the Verse preceeding our Text, That *there shall in nowise enter into it any Thing that defileth*? Because there is the River ever running. Here we have only the Streams running sometimes, but there is the River itself, the pure River, continually running. O let impure polluted Souls come now to the Streams of this pure and purifying River, as they are running from Christ in a Gospel-dispensation, and never rest till they win to the River of perfect Purity.

3dly, It is described from the *quickning Virtue* of it: It is a pure River of Water of *Life*. This

This River of Water is the living Spirit of God; the Spirit of Life, that quickens whom he will: He hath Life in himself, and by him dead Souls are quickned, and made to live for ever. All earthly elementary Waters have a Beginning; but this River, the Spirit of God, is from Everlasting to Everlasting, without Beginning and without End. Other Rivers are fed by Springs and Fountains; but this River of the Spirit is himself the Fountain of living Waters, as well as a River. This River proceeds from God, and yet the River is God himself; *For there are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these Three are One.* Tho' God hath provided a Chancel of Ordinances to convey some of the Water of this River to us, for quickning and refreshing us; yet the River cannot be circumscribed or limited as it is in itself. O let dead Souls conceive Hope of Life; here is the living and Life-giving Spirit of God, to give the Life of Grace, the Life of Peace and Pardon, the Life of Holiness and Sanctification, the Life of Joy and Consolation, the Life of Communion and Fellowship with God, which are all the Beginning and Commencement of everlasting Life, as I have already shew'd.

4thly, This River of Water is described from the *Brightness, Splendor and Glory* of it. 'Tis *clear as Crystal*. This I think may point out both the Pleasure and the Perspicuity of the River. What a pleasant River is the Spirit, in the everlasting Flow of his Influences and Comforts! How sweetly do the Redeem'd drink of this River of Pleasure! *Psal. xxxvi. 8. In the Presence*

sence of God there is Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore, Psal. xvi. last. And what a perspicuous River is that of the Spirit, *clear as Crystal*? The Spirit; as a Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Christ, makes clear Discoveries as a Crystal Glass, or a Crystalline transparent River. It is by the Spirit we *behold, as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. last. It is the Spirit that glorieth Christ, by shewing the Things of Christ: He giveth clear Discoveries of the Glory of Christ, and the Glory of God's Perfections in him. The Spirit of Life is the Spirit of Light, that giveth the fiducial Vision here, and the beatifical Vision hereafter.

The *Third* Thing proposed was, To shew what may be imported in this River being said to *proceed out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb*.

1. It imports, That God and the Lamb have but one and the same Throne, from whence the River of the Spirit and all spiritual Blessings do proceed. Here are good News to us this Day, when we are to commemorate the Sufferings of the Lamb of God; That, as the Lamb that was slain upon the Cross is now sitting upon the Throne, so God and the Lamb have not two Thrones, but one and the same Throne. The Throne of God is the Throne of the Lamb, and the Throne of the Lamb is the Throne of God, Rev. iii. 21, &c. *I am set down with my Father in his Throne. He is the Lamb in the Midst of the Throne of God*: But of this I have formerly treated.

2. It imports, That God and the Lamb have but one and the same Spirit. The River *proceeds from the Throne of God and of the Lamb.* The Spirit of God is the Spirit of the Lamb, and the Spirit of the Lamb is the Spirit of God. Happy they that have the Spirit of Christ in them, for the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of God. He is the Spirit both of the Father and of the Son. *All Things that the Father hath are mine,* says Christ, *John xvi. 15.* And particularly the Father's Spirit is the Son's ; Hence it is said, *Gal. iv. 6. Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* This River proceeds not out of the Throne of God, or the Father's Throne only; but out of the Throne of the Lamb also, the Son's Throne. The Spirit of Life, for quickning dead Souls unto everlasting Life, proceeds not out of the Throne of God as an absolute God, but as a God in Christ ; and therefore is said to *proceed out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb.*

3. It imports, That the Fulness of the Godhead that is in Christ is a communicative Fulness ; and hence the River is said to issue *from the Throne of God and of the Lamb.* The everlasting Spring of the River is within the Throne of God, where the Lamb sits : And the Lamb is anointed with the Spirit above Measure ; for *the Father giveth not the Spirit by Measure unto him,* John iii. 34. And this Ocean of Divine Fulness that is in him is not shut up within the Throne, but proceeds like a River out of it, that we out of his Fulness may receive, and Grace for Grace, *John i. 16.* This Commu-
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cation is free, as free as the Run of a Stream out of a Spring. And as the River proceeds freely out of the Throne, so we may as freely come and drink of the Water of Life that runs out towards us. But again it imports,

4. That the giving out of the Spirit, and of all spiritual Blessings, is a Part of the Royalty of Christ, and the Fruit of his mounting the Throne of Heaven after he had finished his Work upon Earth : And hence, *When he ascended up on High, leading Captivity captive, he received Gifts for Men, even for the Rebels,* Psal. lxxviii. 18. The giving out of the Spirit in the most plentiful Manner was deferr'd till the Lamb that was slain should be in the Midst of the Throne. *John* vii. 39. 'tis said, *the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified :* But, whenever he is glorified, then the River in a plentiful Manner was to proceed out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb. *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.* Whenever I am glorified upon the Throne, then I will shew the River of the Water of Life proceeding out of the Throne. The giving then of the Spirit of Life is a Part of the Mediator's Royalty. Christ, as a King, hath the giving of the Spirit ; this belongs to his Administration, as the Lamb now upon the Throne : Hence says Christ, *John* xiv. 26. *The Father will send him in my Name,* even in my Name and Authority, as the crown'd King of Zion ; and, *John* xvi. 7. *I will send him.* Thus God and the Lamb agree from the Imperial Throne, to send from thence the River,

ver, the Spirit of Life, as an Evidence of the Mediator's Exaltation, and of his glorious Kingdom and Royalty. Our Lord Jesus Christ sways his Sceptre of Grace, and erects and maintains his Kingdom, by sending forth his Spirit. The Lamb was sacrificed to purchase; and is enthroned to give the Spirit; and O but the Spirit is a Royal Blessing! As Christ is a Priest upon the Throne, so these that share of his Spirit are a Royal Priesthood; and, having the Spirit, they are Kings and Priests to their God. Let us wait this Day about the Throne for this glorious Fruit and Effect of his Royal Bounty.

The *Fourth* Thing proposed was, To shew whence it is that this River of Life, for quickning dead Souls to everlasting Life, *proceeds out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb.*

1. It is to shew, That as the Grace of God towards Sinners is reigning Grace, enthroned Grace; so it reigns through the Righteousness of Christ to eternal Life, *Rom. v. last.* And that no Life, no spiritual Life, by the Word and Spirit of God, is to be expected, but as it runs in this Chancel. No Life by the Law or Covenant of Works is now to be expected. God and *Adam* are now separate, and the Chancel of the Communication of Life, or of living Waters, by his Covenant with the first *Adam*, is clean cut off: But, behold, God and the Lamb are join'd together in an everlasting Covenant, and sit together on an everlasting Throne. The Fulness of the Godhead is gone in to the second *Adam*, the Fulness of the Spirit of Life is given to the
Lamb

Lamb above Measure, *John* iii. 34. And now the Lamb, being *the Lord our Righteousness*, is exalted to the Father's Throne ; a Throne enriched with the River of Life. Grace reigns on that Throne, through the Righteousness of Christ, to the Communication of all the Blessings of everlasting Life. Mercy vents through the Blood of Christ, through the Blood of the Lamb, once hanging upon the Cross, and now reigning upon the Throne.

2. This River of Life is discovered as proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb, to shew the distinct OEconomy of the glorious Trinity in this Business of our Redemption, and of the eternal Salvation of lost Sinners. God the Father, the first Person in the Order of Subsistence, sits upon the Throne of his sovereign Grace ; God the Son, the Lamb that was the Purchaser of Life on the Cross, is made the Administrator thereof upon the Throne ; God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is the great Applier, bringing home the Blessings purchased to all the Redeem'd in a perpetual Flow of Divine Communications : And hence all the Store of Divine Things and Blessings that the Spirit communicates are said to be the Things of God the Father, and Christ the Son, discovered and dispensed by the Holy Ghost, *John* xvi. 14, 15. *He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shew it unto you. All Things that the Father hath are mine ; therefore said I, He shall take of mine and shew it unto you. And hence also Believers are said to receive the Spirit which is of God, that they may know the Things that are*

are freely given them of God, 1 Cor. ii. 12. Thus we see the distinct OEconomy of each Person of the glorious Trinity in this Matter, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, One God in Three Persons; and how we are equally indebted to each of them for the Benefit of Redemption.

3. This River of Life is discovered as proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb, to shew the essential Unity and glorious Harmony of the ever-blessed Trinity, notwithstanding of their personal Distinction; according to 1 John v. 7. *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One.* And this essential Unity or natural Oneness is, I think, pointed out in our Text, where the Throne being call'd the Throne of God and of the Lamb, declares what Christ himself declared, John x. 30. *I and my Father are One.* And if the Spirit were not the Fountain of living Water, equally and essentially One with the Father and the Son, how could he proceed like a River out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb? So that, as in this clear Glass of the Gospel we see the distinct OEconomy of the glorious Trinity in the Work of Redemption, and their personal Distinction, so we may see their essential Unity or natural Oneness; *These Three are One God, &c.* And in the same Light we see their glorious Harmony in our Redemption-work. As it is said of the *Three that bear Witness on Earth, the Spirit, the Water and the Blood*, that they agree in One; so we may say of the *Three that bear Witness in Heaven*, that, as *these Three are One*, One in

Nature ; so they agree in one, in one great and glorious Work and Design towards the Salvation of poor Sinners. There is a perfect Harmony and Agreement between God and the Lamb upon the same Throne : And how doth the Spirit harmonize and agree with the Father and the Son proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb like a pure Crystal River ? and thus shewing, that everlasting Life is from God in Christ, by the Spirit. Again, another Reason is,

4. To shew the excellent Firmness and Stability of the New-Covenant Blessings, and on what a sure Ground and Bottom the eternal Life and Happiness of the Church militant and triumphant is built. These Blessings are equally secured with the Throne of God and of the Lamb, and the perpetual Flow of the River of the Water of Life that proceeds therefrom. The everlasting Life of the Redeemed is some-way interwoven with the personal Properties of the glorious Trinity : For as the Spirit, personally considered, proceeds from the Father and the Son ; so he proceeds communicatively out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb, to water all the Redeemed, as an everflowing and overflowing River of everlasting Life. A glorious Trinity may be seen in every spiritual Blessing : Hence may a Believer say, This Pardon, for Example, is a Divine Blessing, it comes from the Throne of God ; it is a purchased Blessing, it is from the Throne of the Lamb ; it is a seal'd Blessing, by the Spirit, as a River running from the Throne of God and of the Lamb, so as the Happiness of the Redeemed cannot fail, nor the

the River cease to run out to their everlasting Life, no more than God can cease to be God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, One everlasting God, in Three Persons. The Stream of Grace here, and Glory hereafter, proceeds from a Fountain that can never be drain'd; here they will drink, and bathe, and swim for ever. The Throne of God will still be the Throne of the Lamb, he will still be a God in Christ: And the Throne of the Lamb will still be the Throne of God; for to him the Father says, *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever*: And the Throne of God and of the Lamb will still be a Throne whence the everlasting Spirit will proceed like a pure Crystal River; for he will never cease to be a free Spirit, a free Fountain of living Waters. O glorious and blessed Security!

The *Fifth* Thing proposed was, To deduce some Inferences for the Application. Is it so that the living Spirit of God, communicating all the Blessings of everlasting Life graciously here, and gloriously hereafter, proceeds like a pure Crystal River out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb? Then,

1st, Hence see the Harmony between the Church militant and triumphant; they drink of the same River: Only here we have but Drops, but there they have the Ocean, and drink at the Fountain-head; The utmost here is a Staying us with Flagons, but there the Redeemed swim in the River of Life. The Saints in Glory, as well as Believers on Earth, hold their Title unto everlasting Life of Christ: Their everlasting Happiness is grounded upon the Blood of the

Lamb, and flows from the Throne of God and of the Lamb. Christ will be the Glass, even in Heaven, wherein the Glory of God will be seen through the pure River of the Water of Life clear as Crystal.

2dly, Hence see the Happinels of every Believer that hath got but one saving Drop of this River poured out upon his Heart ; for this Spirit of God and of the Lamb will be *in him a Well of Water springing up to everlasting Life*, John iv. 14. and that because this Water proceeds from the Throne of God and of the Lamb. It is a Royal Blessing from the Divine Throne, and the Blessings of the Throne are the best Blessings. Many are content with the Blessings of the Footstool, and hunt only after these, saying, *Who will shew us any earthly Good?* But, blessed are these that cannot be satisfied with any Thing less than Throne-blessings; *Lord, lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon me : Then shall I have more Gladness than the wicked World, in the Time that their Corn and Wine increase*, Psal. iv. 6. O see what a Royal Gift it is to get the Spirit; Christ *ascended up on High, and led Captivity captive, and received Gifts for Men*.

3dly, Hence see the Glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shining in the Work of Redemption through Jesus, and in the Way of our Salvation through his Blood and Righteousness. Here, as in a Glass, we may see the Glory of God the Father sitting on the same Throne with Christ, that is, appearing as a God in Christ; the Glory of Christ the Son, our Redeemer, exalted to the Father's Throne, after

ter he had finished his Work ; and the Glory of the Holy Ghost in his Breathings and Blessings, and Graces and Comforts, proceeding like a pure Crystal River out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb : And also the Glory of all the Divine Attributes, their Honour is secured in this Throne of Grace, from whence Grace and Mercy vents, to the Credit and Honour of Justice and Truth, through the Justice-satisfying Blood of the Lamb ; therefore it is said, *Justice and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne.*

4thly, Hence see how glorious the Gospel is, and how powerful, while it is the Chancel where- in the Spirit of Life, the River of the Water of Life runs from the Throne of God and of the Lamb ; *Gal. iii. 2. Received ye the Spirit by the Works of the Law, or by the Hearing of Faith ? It is by the Hearing of Faith ; and hence the Spirit and the Word are put together in a Promise to Christ, and in him to all his Seed, Isa. lix. last. This is my Covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit which is upon thee, and my Words which I have put in thy Mouth, shall not depart out of thy Mouth, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed's Seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.* This River of Life for quickning dead Souls runs always in the Chancel of the Word of Grace and Promise, and the Gospel is the Ministration of the Spirit in the Hands of his sent Servants ; and this ought to be highly prized by all that are Followers of the Lamb, and would enjoy the Witness of his Spirit from the Throne. There are indeed, in our Day, many

many that are but Ministers of the Letter, these ought to be discouraged and discountenanced ; but there are some evidently Ministers of the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit, these ought to be highly encouraged and countenanced ; for, tho' *the Letter kills, the Spirit gives Life*, 2 Cor. iii. 6. It is dangerous to desert a Ministry wherein the Spirit of Life runs ; this were to run away from the River that proceeds out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb. This, by the By, may shew us a Rule for our Conduct in this Day of Division, when many of the Lord's own Children are ready to run to some dangerous Extremes with Reference to their countenancing this or the other Minister. Why, if they are Ministers of the Letter, that have nothing of a Gospel-spirit, or of the Spirit of Faith or Faithfulness in preaching or managing ; and, if this be evident, why not? let us testify duly against them : But, if we have to do with Ministers of the Spirit, let us remember that some of these are appointed of God for such a Work, and some for another Work ; and some of them have a greater Measure of the Spirit of Faith and Zeal than others, and some of them have a lesser Measure given them of God, according to the Work he hath for them : But, if they have any Measure of a Gospel-spirit, and of the Spirit of Faith and Faithfulness in their Station, tho' they come not up to the same Measure and Degree with others, nor be set upon the very same Ground, beware of slighting and despising them ; for the great River of the City of God runs out in many Streams, some greater and some lesser,
and

and to despise the least Stream is to despise the River; *He that despiseth you despiseth me.*

5thly, Hence see what it is that would make good and happy Days in the Church militant; namely, the running out of this River more plentifully, *Isa. xxxii. 14, 15, 16, 17.*—— *Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the Wilderness be a fruitful Field, &c.* O when may we expect such a Day! Indeed, such is the universal Corruption of Church and State, and such hath been our Perjury, Covenant-breaking and Blood-shed, unrepented of; and such is the Profanity, Error and Blasphemy of the Day we live in, that in all Appearance, before the happy Day of the Outpouring of the Spirit, we may expect a terrible Day of the Outpouring of Blood, wherein our Land shall be turn'd into a Field of Blood, and our Streets to Rivers of Blood. Our National bloody Sins are crying for bloody Vengeance, and many see it hastening on. But O what is it that will wash away *Scotland's* bloody Guilt and bloody Gore at once! What but a Flood from Heaven, even a Flow of the pure River, clear as Crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb! Whatever sad Days may come before it, yet this is the happy Day you ought to seek, for *Zion's* Sake, and for the Sake of rising Generations in *Scotland*, and of future Ages.

6thly, Hence see what would make a heart-som Communion-solemnity among us this Day, amidst all the sad Signs of the Times, namely, the running down of this River. And see at the same Time what Ground we have to expect
this

this River of Life to run out ; The Ground of Hope is, because the Lamb is enthron'd. The Time was that the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, was not given plentifully, *because Jesus was not yet glorified*, John vii. 39. But now Jesus is glorified, the Lamb is sitting on his Father's Throne ; therefore we may seek and expect that the Spirit may be poured out. Let Faith act, for Supplies of this Water, upon Christ's Exaltation to the Father's Right-hand to give Repentance and Remission of Sins ; exalted to give the Spirit of Faith and Repentance, to give the Spirit of Holiness and Comfort ; exalted to the well-water'd Throne, to let out the River plentifully. Again,

7thly, To raise our Hope and Expectation, let us from this Doctrine see, that the Throne of God and of the Lamb is no penurious Throne, that hath little to spare : As in our Father's House there is Bread enough and to spare, so about our Father's Throne, the Throne of God and of the Lamb, there is Water enough and to spare, the pure River of the Water of Life fully and freely proceeding out of it. The seven Spirits are said to be before the Throne, *Rev. i. 4.* that is, the one eternal Spirit of God, as a River flowing out in all his various Streams of Gifts, Graces, Influences, Operations, Breathings, Blessings and Comforts ; This River is before the Throne. Which says, by the By, that it is good to go boldly and frequently to the Throne of Grace ; for this quickning River of the Water of Life being before it, whenever we begin to go to that Throne, the quickning River will meet us by the Way ; and whenever our Feet touch

touch the River, then, like a Flood, it will carry us off our own Feet, and bear us up towards the Throne, as the Water did the Ark to the Top of *Ararat*.

8thly, Hence see how we may attain Communion with God at a Communion-table, and how we are to go there: You ought to go with as great Awe and Reverence as if you were going to the Throne of God, for his Throne is at the Head of the Table. But then, how shall we go to the Throne of God, who is an infinitely holy and just God, whereas we are guilty, guilty Sinners? Why, we cannot go to the Throne of God but through Jesus Christ; and through him we ought to go boldly, because it is not only the Throne of God, but of the Lamb, by whose Blood we have Boldness to enter into the Holiest. But again, if you think, How shall we go thus to the Throne of God and of the Lamb, having no Life or Power to do any Thing? Why, indeed we cannot win to it but as it were swimming in the River that is before the Throne, the River of the Spirit's Influences and Graces, that proceeds out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb. That which brings us to the Throne must proceed out of the Throne; therefore we are to go believingly and dependently, being strong only in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus, the Grace that is in the Throne of Grace to be freely communicate from it.

9thly, Hence we may see the Marks and Characters of right and worthy Communicants. They are such as have got a Discovery of what is here shewed unto *John*: *He shewed me a pure*
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River of Water of Life, clear as Crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb. I do not mean, that every true Believer gets such an extraordinary Discovery as *John* here got the Revelation of; but there is something of the Mystery thereof in some Degree that I think every Believer gets some View of, particularly in these three Things, by which you may examine yourself.

1. Have you ever got a View of the Throne of God, I mean of God himself, in his infinite Holiness and Justice? For God sits upon the Throne of his Holiness, Justice, and other glorious Attributes; and to see the Throne of God, is to see and know him to be Majesty itself; for a Throne points out Majesty. Have you ever apprehended the Majesty of his Holiness and Justice, and that the Throne of Iniquity cannot have Fellowship with him; that *he is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*; that he is a God *that will by no Means clear the Guilty*? And hath ever the View of this made you tremble and quake, and fear lest you should never have Fellowship with him, because you are nothing but a Mass of Sin and Guilt?

2. Have you ever, upon the Back of this, got a View of the Throne of God as the Throne of the Lamb, so as the terrible Majesty of the Throne hath been allay'd by the Apprehension of Divine Mercy, venting through the Blood of the Lamb that was slain; slain virtually from the Foundation of the World, slain actually on the Cross at *Jerusalem*, and now sitting gloriously upon his Father's Throne? In this Light have you seen infinite Holiness honoured

noured and vindicated by the Obedience of the Lamb, and infinite Justice pleased and satisfied by the Death and Blood of the Lamb? and hath the View of this turned the Throne of God from a terrible to an amiable Throne in your Eye? The Throne of God and of the Lamb is nothing else but a God in Christ reconciling the World to himself, a God declaring himself well pleased in Jesus Christ. Hath the View of this turned your Fear to Hope, and your Terror to Triumph?

3. Have you ever hereupon seen and felt, to your Experience, living Waters proceeding from the Throne of God and of the Lamb? Have you seen the Fulness of the Spirit to be in Christ, as anointed therewith above Measure? And have you ever found this living Water gushing from the Throne as it were in a sweet Flood of Influences? when you was pouring out your Heart before the Lord, he was pouring out this Flood upon you, and making you as it were swim in this River. Believer, know you not something less or more about this? Well, what was the Quality of the Water which you was then baptized with? May be you came to the Throne empty and destitute, and dry Ground; but, before you went away, you was filled as with the Fulness of a River gushing out upon you. May be you came to the Throne very dead and lifeless, saying, O is it possible that these dry Bones can live? but your Soul was quickned and brought to Life and Liveliness, so as you found the River to be indeed a River of the Water of Life, of Life to your dead Soul. May be you came polluted and unclean,

crying out, *Behold, I am vile* ; Will ever such a vile Beast have Access to God, or be washen from such Stains ? yet, behold, you found your Soul surrounded with purifying Waters, with the pure River of the Water of Life, insomuch that perhaps at that Time, tho' it was a Mistake, yet you joyfully imagin'd, that all Pollution, Corruption and Impurity was washen away with the happy Flood that sweetly overwhelm'd you, and drown'd all your Lusts : Was not the River then in your View as a pure and purifying River ? Again, May be you came to the Throne under many Doubts and Fears, and dark Clouds ; but, say you, before I went away ; I got a clear View of the Mercy of God in Christ, a clear View of his everlasting Love, a clear View of the Door of Hope open to me ; or at least, that there was Hope in Israel even for me. You thus found the pure River of the Water of Life to be clear as Crystal, when a Gush of that Water was able to clear your Eye when it was dim, to clear your Mind when it was dark and confused, to clear your Conscience when it was black with Guilt : The Streams of the River clear as Crystal, running through your Heart, made all clear before it. Have you ever got any View and Experience of these Things in some Measure, however small the Degree be ? then you have the Mark and Character of such as have a Right to the Communion-table : But, if you never got a View of the Throne of God, or of the Majesty of God, so as to fear his Wrath because of your Sinfulness ; and if you never got a View of the Throne of the Lamb, or of the Mercy of God in Christ, so as to hope in his

his Mercy, as venting through the Blood of the Lamb ; and if you never felt any Drop of this pure River of the Water of Life, clear as Crystal, proceeding out of that Throne ; if you never found one Gush of that River of the Spirit's Influences, either filling your empty Soul, quickning your dead Soul, purifying your polluted Soul, or clearing your dark Mind ; then surely you have no Right to the Communion-table, as being a Stranger to Communion and Fellowship with God in Christ by the Spirit.

It may be some poor weak Believer will tell me, Sir, I think indeed I'm no utter Stranger to what you have been saying : 'There' was such a Time, and such a Time, wherein I thought I got a View of these Things ; but, alas, all is now gone ! the Throne of God and of the Lamb is out of View, and the Gush of Influences from the Throne, that I was watered with, is all dried up, and I'm nothing but a Piece of parched Ground. Well, it may be so, but here is good News ; The Throne of God and of the Lamb is to the fore, the pure River of the Water of Life is still to the fore, and the Throne of God and of the Lamb is still the Fountain of living Waters, that can never be dried up or drain'd, but is as full as ever : Therefore wait about the Throne for the Pouring out of the Spirit, as *Waters upon the thirsty, and Floods upon the dry Ground.*

10thly, Hence see the Duty of all that hear this Gospel, namely, to come and take of the Water of Life freely ; to come to Christ, and drink of the River that proceeds out of the Throne. This Inference is drawn from this Do-

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Strine, in the 17th Verse of the same Chapter ; *The Spirit and the Bride say, Come ; and let him that heareth say, Come ; and let him that is athirst come ; and whosoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely.* Isa. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the Waters.* John vii. 37. *On the great Day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any Man thirst, let him come unto me and drink : For he that believeth on me, out of his Belly, out of his Heart and Bowels, shall flow Rivers of living Water.* This he speaks of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.

He who then stood and cried in this Manner before he ascended to the Throne, he appointed us to be Criers in his Name, with this Encouragement, *Lo, I am with you always to the End of the World.* Indeed, if it were not for this Encouragement, in vain would we cry to you ; but O regard the Cry of the Son of God, saying, *If any Man thirst, let him come to me and drink of this pure River of living Water.* I cannot offer you the Sacrament safely, till I offer Christ to you, the Substance of it ; and you cannot take the Sacrament honestly, till you accept of the Offer, otherwise you'll eat and drink unworthily. Let me therefore press this Exhortation on you, before I close, with a few Considerations ; and O look up for Power to accompany them. I shall go no further than my Text and Context.

(1.) Consider the Authority by which you are called to come to Christ and drink of these living Waters. It is a Divine Authority ; the Orders are issued from the Throne of God,

1 John

1 John iii. 23. *This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ.* Are Orders from an earthly Throne to be regarded, coming in the Name and Authority of the Prince? O what infinitely more Regard is to be had to the Throne of God! to the Divine Authority! If a poor Man only were calling you to come to Christ, you might safely sit the Call, and say, By what Authority do you these Things? But all the Authority of the Throne of God and of the Lamb is here interposed, and you cannot sit the Call without trampling on the Authority of God.

(2.) Consider the Glory of that Jesus, who invites you to come to him and share of this living Water, and drink of this pure Crystal River. O that, in this clear Stream of the Spirit's Illumination, you could see the Glory of Christ, who says, *He shall glorify me!* There is a twofold Glory of Christ here; He presents, 1st, His Imperial Throne; 2^{dly}, His glorious Mediatorial Fulness. His glorious Throne: How glorious soever the Throne of God is, so glorious is the Throne of the Lamb; for here you see the Throne of the Lamb is the Throne of God: For tho' he be the Lamb that was slain, yet he is God equal with the Father, *and thinks it no Robbery to be equal with God*; and the Father thinks it no Disparagement to him to set the Lamb in the Midst of his Throne. O glorious Jesus! His Blood was the Blood of God: His Righteousness the Righteousness of God: His Wisdom is the Wisdom of God: His Power is the Power of God; and his Throne is the Throne of God. Angels and Archangels worship

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ship with Reverence before his Throne. His glorious Fulness is here also presented, *all the Fulness of the Godhead is in him* ; all the Father's Fulness is in him, and all the Spirit's Fulness is in him. The Fulness of the Spirit that ever any mere Creature had, is but like the Fulness of a Vessel ; but the Fulness of the Spirit that is in Christ, the Lamb of God, is the Fulness of a Fountain : And hence it is that the Spirit, and all spiritual Blessings, proceed like a *pure River of Water of Life out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb.*

(3.) Consider the Qualities of these Waters which Jesus calls you to come to him for. They are such as, whatever be your sad natural State, or your miserable present Case, there is suitable Relief presented therein. 1. Are you destitute and empty of all Good, empty of all Grace ? O let that be no Hindrance, but a Reason to move you to come to Christ, and look to the Lamb that is on the Father's Throne ; for here is a full Fountain, a flowing River : He calls you not to come and give, but to come and take what you need. O bring all your empty Buckets here ; this River comprehends no less than God himself and all his Perfections, Christ himself and all his Fulness, the Spirit himself and all his Graces, Blessings and Comforts. 2. Are you dead in Law, and dead in Sin, dead in State, and Heart and Frame ? Let that be no Hindrance, but a Reason to move you to come to Jesus for a Drink of this River, because it is the River of the Water of Life. Christ's great Complaint is, *You will not come to me, that you might have Life* ; The Life of Absolution from the Sentence of the Law

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can be no active without a passive Gathering, *o. 44*
No Man can come to me, except the Father which hath
sent me draw him. Both these are express'd by the
 Spouse in one Word, *Draw me, we will run after thee.*
 The passive Gathering is God's drawing Sinners to
 Christ, the active Gathering is their Running to him
 when drawn. This is such a necessary Distinction,
 that it must be taken along with the Whole of our
 Discourse upon this Subject; wherein we must con-
 sider this Gathering sometimes in an active, and some-
 times in a passive Sense, because the one cannot be
 without the other. When irresistible Power is put forth,
 there must be a Gathering, *Psal. cx. 3. Thy People*
shall be willing in the Day of thy Power; and where
 there is such a Gathering, it is a Fruit of that Ex-
 erting of Divine Power in its irresistible Efficacy.
 Hence I offer a

2d Remark, That in this Gathering of the People
 to *Shiloh*, there are certain Gatherers employed. The
 great and glorious Gatherer is God himself, when he
 draws Sinners to himself with the Cords of Love and
 Bands of a Man; that is, in a powerful, irresistible
 Manner; and yet not violenting the Will, as *Armini-*
ans dream, but with loving and rational Arguments,
 conquering, carrying, captivating and overpowering
 the whole Soul. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
 are employed in this Gathering-work; It is done by
 the Care of the Father, by the Pains of the Son, and
 by the Power of the Holy Ghost; It is done by
 the Motion of the Father, by the Moven of the Son,
 and by the Might of the eternal Spirit. God the Fa-
 ther is the Gatherer, *Eph. i. 10.* He is said to gather
 into one all Things by Christ. Christ himself, to
 whom the Gathering is, is also the Gatherer, *John*
xi. 52. where it is said of him, that he would gather
 together into one the Children of God that were scat-
 tered abroad. And that the Holy Ghost is the imme-
 diate Gatherer, is plain, in that as the Father sends
 the Son to gather, so the Son sends the Spirit to gather
 the People to him: Hence the Spirit is said to reveal
 Christ, to testify of Christ, to glorify Christ, to in-

cite the People to Christ, Rev. xxii. 17. *The Spirit and the Bride say, Come* : And he not only says it externally to the Ear by his Word, but internally to the Soul by his common Motions, and efficaciously to the Heart by his irresistible Operation ; like that Word by which the World was made, when God said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light* ; so, when the Spirit says, *Let there be Faith, there is Faith*. Hence, he that is called *the Spirit of Faith*, 2 Cor. iv. 13. is also *the Spirit of Power*, 2 Tim. i. 7. For he both begins and carries on the Work of Faith with Power, and so powerfully draws Sinners to Christ, and effectually gathers the People to *Shiloh*. The principal Gatherers then are the blessed Persons of the glorious Trinity : The Father does it, thro' the Son, by the Holy Ghost. This adorable Three in One work to each Other's Hand. There are subordinate Gatherers, which God does employ ; particularly Ministers of the Gospel, whose greatest Work lies in winning Souls, and gathering People to Christ, therefore called *Workers together with God*, 2 Cor. vi. 1. Their main Business is to sound the Trumpet, and gather the People to *Shiloh* ; They are to preach Christ, to proclaim Christ, to offer Christ, to invite Sinners to Christ, and that is all they can do : They may cast down the Gospel Net, but they will catch nothing, unless the Lord himself gather in the Fish ; *Except the Lord build the City, the Builders build in vain*. The Gospel is then the Power of God to Salvation, that is, his Organical Power, the Instrument of his Power, when it is the Ministration of the Spirit ; *Not by Strength nor by Might, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord*. Seek then, that his Power may accompany the Word, otherwise it will not be a gathering Word. Now, as Ministers are the subordinate Gatherers under Heaven's Influence by Office ; so may private Christians, whose Souls are gathered to Christ : They may be Gatherers in their Station, not indeed by Office ministerially and authoritatively. But by private Admonition and Counsel charitatively. Thus Parents, by their Precept and

Example, may be the Instruments of gathering their Children to Christ, Masters their Servants, and private Christians their Neighbours: And happy these that thro' Grace are thus employed, whether as Ministers or Christians! for they are wise; *He that winneth Souls, is wise. And they that be wise* (Dan. xii 3.) or as it may be read, they that be Teachers, *shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteousness as the Stars for ever and ever.* But them again,

The 3^d Remark I offer is, That there are certain Airths from whence the Gathering of the People is made. Whence are they gathered, may you say? Why, this is to be considered both in Point of Place, and in Point of State. First, In Point of Place, whence is the Gathering to *Skiloh*, and from what Airth? Why, even from every Airth, *Luke. xiii. 29. They shall come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God.* This Gathering to *Skiloh*, considered even literally and extensively, will be from all the four Airths, and from all the four Corners of the Earth, from *Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.* Hence it is said of Christ's Dominion, *Psal. lxxii. 8. that he shall have it from Sea to Sea, and from the River to the Ends of the Earth;* and not only the large Continent, but the little Isles are included, *v. 10, 11. The Kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring Presents, and the Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer Gifts: Yea, all Kings shall fall down before him, and all Nations shall serve him.* You have all the four Airths mentioned, *Isa. xliiii. 5, 6. I will bring thy Seed from the East, and gather thee from the West; and will say to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not back: Bring my Sons from far, and my Daughters from the Ends of the Earth.* When the Isles and Ends of the Earth are so much mentioned, even the outmost Ends of the Earth, to be Christ's Possession; we may therein see and wonder at the Grace of God, that in his Counsel of old, concerning the Gathering of the People to *Skiloh*, he had

a View to our far away Northern Isles among the
 rest, even *Britain* and *Ireland*, *Scotland* and *Zetland*.
 When God will count the People that were gathered
 to *Shiloh*, it will be said even of poor remote
Scotland, *This Man and that Man was born there*;
 and O that the Number were increased, and a greater
 Gathering-time would come than ever hath been!
 O for a gathering Power, a Day of Power! However,
 it is from all Airths that the Gathering of the
 People shall be to Christ: It is not confined in one
 Place; to him shall the Gathering be, from *Asia* in
 the East, and from *America* in the West, from *Africa*
 in the South, and from *Europe* in the North, not
 forgetting the *European* Isles in the Midst of the
 Northern Seas. Secondly, In Point of State. Whence
 is the Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, and from
 what Airth, from what State and Condition are
 they to be gathered? Here let me allude to the
 four Elements, Water, Fire, Earth, and Air, out of
 which they are gathered. 1st, Some are gathered
 as it were out of the Water, and fish'd out of the
 Flood; and hence, as Ministers in gathering Souls
 are called Fishers of Men, and the Gospel the Fish-
 net cast into the Sea, for gathering of every Kind,
Matth. xiii. 47. so they are gathered out of the Sea
 of a troublesome tempestuous World, out of the Wa-
 ter and Floods of Sin and Misery, where they are
 swimming. When the Lord gathers People to himself,
 he must fish them, and gather them out of many Wa-
 ters and great Depths, even out of the Depth of Secu-
 rity, out of the Depth of Sensuality, where they were
 swimming pleasantly, yet dangerously, ready to swim
 in to the dead Sea of everlasting Destruction. No-
 thing but the Hand of God could reach to the Bot-
 tom of the Depth whence the Lord does gather his
 Elect. 2^{dly}, Some are gathered as it were out of the
 Fire, *Zeck. iii. 2.* *Is not this a Brand plucked out of the*
Fire? There is a Fire of Lust and Lewdness that some
 are burning in; *For Wickedness burns as the Fire*, *Isa. ix.*
18. and to be gathered out of the Torrid Zone, and
 brought

brought to a temperate Climate, is a great Matter. Out of this Fire they must be gathered, that are gathered unto *Shiloh*. There is the Fire of God's Wrath, which is a consuming Fire, wherein they are in utmost Danger of being consumed for ever; but when the Lord gathers the People, he puts his Hand as it were into the Midst of the Fire, and plucks them as Brands out of the Burning. 3dly, Again they are gathered out of the Earth, out of the Dust and Dung of the Earth. Some are groveling on the Earth, and licking the Dust like Serpents, having their Hearts and Affections clogged with the Clay, in Respect of their Worldliness, Earthliness, Covetousness, while the Heart is so set upon earthly Things, that they are lost, and hid among the Clay, and covered with the Dust; and from thence they must be gathered, *Isa. lvii. 17, 18. For the Iniquity of his Covetousness was I wroth, &c. I have seen his Ways and will heal him, and lead him also.* O the Kindness of God, in gathering Souls out of such a Pickle! Yea, some are not only covered with the Dust, but lying among the Dung of this Earth, sticking in the miry Clay, and wallowing in all the gross Abominations and Pollutions of the World, such as these mentioned, *1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.* yet out the very Dung does he gather the People to *Shiloh*; Such were some of you, but ye are washen, &c. He gathers his Sheep out of the most dirty Mire. Let none presume, for he is Sovereign, and lets some stick and perish in the Mire; Let none despair, for he is merciful, and draws out some from the very Dung. When *Antigonus* a King past by a Ditch, into which a Sheep was fallen, the Historian says, he pulled it out, tho' foul and dirty, with his own Hand; for which he was exceedingly beloved, and commended by his Subjects. But behold the King of *Israel* is yet kinder: He not only stoops to filthy Ditches of Sin, into which his Sheep are fallen, and gathers them with his Arm, but lays them in his Bosom, *Isa. xl. 11.* that he may warm them with his Heart-love, and wash them with his Heart-

Blood. 4thly, Again, they are gathered out of the Air, in a Manner ; while the Prince of the Power of the Air is flying away with them, they are gathered out of his Claws. Some that are Satan's Captives, they are flying in the Air as it were, with the Wings of Pride and Vanity, exalting themselves above all that is called God. They learn of *Lucifer* to be proud and lofty, looking down upon others as if they were the Dregs and Offscourings of the Earth: When God gathers any such, he hath them to bring down from lofty Elements, and airy Vanities, that he may humble them under his mighty Hand, and make them stoop to *Shiloh*. Others are, as it were, building Castles in the Air: Such are these, who being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, will not submit to the Righteousness of God, *Rom. x. 3*. This is a high and lofty Building; but it is like a Castle in the Air having no Foundation, but the high and airy Imagination of these that build it ; which the Lord will bring down, when he gathers them out of their Heights and Altitudes, as you see he does, *2 Cor. x. 5*. *The Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong Holds, casting down Imaginations, and every high Thing, that exalts it self against the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ*. There you see high Things, high Thoughts, high Imaginations, all high and airy Buildings exalted against Christ, and his Righteousness ; yea, strong Holds, such as nothing but the mighty Power of God can pull down : Such are all the false Hopes, and legal Dreams of poor Sinners. They hope they will mend, before they die : They'll turn a new Leaf, and live a new Life, and so pay their own Debt, and do their own Business themselves ; Thus they build in the Air a Refuge of Lies, which the Hail must sweep away. And indeed God raises a Storm in the Air, that he may gather his Remnant from thence. As in a dangerous Storm, the Mariner will cast Silk and Sattin over Board, and the most valuable

valuable Things, rather than perish ; even so God raises a Storm of Conviction in the Man's Conscience, that threatens everlasting Shipwreck, that he may cast away his carnal Confidence, and legal Righteousness ; that what Things were Gain to him, these he may count Loss for Christ. Thus, I say, there are some Airths from whence they are gathered : And this leads me to another Remark,

Fourthly, That there are several Things supposed, and imported in this Gathering of the People to *Siblo*. To mention some of these, 1st, It supposes Straying, and imports Conversion. It supposes Straying ; and indeed the natural State is a Straying and wandering State. The Man is wandering away from God, wandering from his Commandments, wandering in a Wilderness, wandering he knows not where away, for the Devil hoodwinks him ; The God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them that believe not : And so they wander in the Dark, in the Darknes of Ignorance, Unbelief, Error, Delusion, and Confusion ; and yet in the Darknels of deep Security, never imagining but that they are in the right enough Way, tho' it be the Way to Hell, thinking that God is altogether like unto themselves, and approves their Way, and allows them in all these Things wherein they allow themselves. Hence it is impossible to bring them off from their carnal Thoughts, and wicked Ways where they are wandering, unless God himself gather them by his converting Grace. This Gathering imports Conversion, wherein God says with Power (as he made the World with an omnipotent LET IT BE, so here) *Let the Wicked forsake his Way*, Isa. lv. 7, 8. *And the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return to the Lord*. But this Power of God, whereby he converts Sinners, rides in the Chariot of Grace, saying, as it follows, *I'll have Mercy on him, I will abundantly pardon*. And here is the Cord of Love and Mercy, with which he draws. The Gospel of Grace is the Power of God to Salvation, the Power of God to Conversion ; without the Faith

and Apprehension of this Mercy, there is no Gospel-repenting, nor Return, no effectual Conversion; *Let him return, for I will abundantly pardon.* There is the Motive, which must be viewed, before any can be moved thereby. But when this Mercy of God in Christ, in multiplying Pardon, where Sin hath been multiplied, is once viewed, then the Soul is melted and moved. What is there Mercy for the like of me, Pardon for the like of me, and abundant Pardon, where Sin hath so abounded? O will I, for great Sins, get great Pardons, and for a Multitude of Sins, a Multitude of Pardons? Will the Mountains of Mercy overtop and cover all the Mountains of my Sins? O, says God this, even to wicked me? This makes all my Bowels melt, and all my Bones to say, who is like unto the Lord? Thus he gathers in Conversion, saying, Wicked Man, turn, for I will abundantly pardon: And O that is a powerful FOR; like a Loadstone, that hath a drawing Vertue upon the hard Steel, so will this draw the hard Heart, and dissolve it. This For is backed with another, *For my Thoughts are not your Thoughts, nor my Ways your Ways*; q. d. With Respect to the proud secure Sinner, do you think that I am altogether like unto your self, and that I approve of your Ways, as if they were my Ways, and your Thoughts, as if they were my Thoughts? Because you allow your self in that Way, you think I allow you also; and your Thoughts is that you shall have Peace, tho' you walk after the Imagination of your own Heart: Nay, my Thoughts are not your Thoughts. Or, with Respect to the self-righteous Sinner, what are your Thoughts? You think that your Way is a very good Way, and so that it is God's Way: And you think that God will accept of you, because you say you do your best, and do as well as you can, and no Body can say black is your Eye; you are a good Neighbour, you are honest in your Dealings: And so you think you are every Way right; and that God thinks as well of you, as you do of your self; and that

hat his Thoughts are your Thoughts, and that
 your Way that you are walking in is his Way :
 Nay, says he, My Thoughts are not your Thoughts,
 neither my Ways your Ways ; for as the Heavens
 are above the Earth, so are my Thoughts and Ways
 above your Thoughts and Ways. O do not measure
 God's Thoughts and Ways by your sinful or selfish
 Thoughts and Ways : If you would not run into
 a Mistake, Man, Woman, look to the Clouds, and
 see how far they are above the Earth ; yea, look
 to the Heavens, and see how far they are above the
 Clouds ; yea, look to the God that made the Heavens,
 and see how far he is exalted above the Heavens :
 And if the Heavens be so far above you, that you
 cannot reach them, or measure them ; O how far is
 God above you, that you should attempt to mea-
 sure his Thoughts and Ways by yours ! Or, again,
 with Respect to the humbled Sinner, that is like to
 be moved and melted with the View of Mercy, but
 yet is tempted to doubt and deny it, saying, O my
 Thoughts are, that God will never have Mercy on
 the like of me, such a God provoking Sinner ; and I
 fear God's Thoughts are the same with mine : Nay
 My Thoughts are not your Thoughts, says God,
 look to the Heavens Man, look to the Heavens Wo-
 man, look to the Heavens Lass, look to the Heavens
 Lad ; for as the Heavens are above the Earth, so
 are my Ways of Grace, and Thoughts of Mercy, a-
 bove your Thoughts and Ways : Your Thoughts are,
 that I have no Way to shew Mercy on you ; and
 therefore, that my Thoughts are to ruine and de-
 stroy you : But I have found a Ransom, through
 which my Mercy does make way and Vent to the
 Credit of Justice ; therefore my Thoughts are
 Thoughts of Peace, and not of Evil. Judge not my
 Thoughts then by the Standard of yours, but rather
 make the Height of the Heavens above the Earth to
 be the Standard whereby to judge of the Height of
 my Mercy, for overtopping all your Sins with abun-
 dant Pardon ; therefore turn : Here is the *For*, the
 threefold *For* or Motive, upon which Turning of

Conversion is urged. This Gathering, I say, supposes Straying, and imports Conversion.

2dly, It supposes Scattering, and imports Convention, *Jobr* xi. 52. It is a Gathering together into one the Children of God that were scattered Abroad. The natural State is a scattered State ; and God's Remnant, whom he hath a mind to gather, are not only scattered here and there through the Earth, but before the Lord gather them, they are like dead and dry Bones scattered about the Grave's Mouth, *Psal.* cxli. 7. They are dead in Trespasses and Sins, dead spiritually, under the Power of Sin ; dead legally, under the Sentence of Death and Damnation ; and not only dead Bones, but dry Bones, no Sap of Grace or Goodness in them : And not only so, but scattered Bones ; How shall these dry Bones live, or these scattered Bones be gathered together ? You see this represented, *Ezek.* xxxvii. The Spirit of Life must come, and gather together the Bones, and make them live ; and then, and not till then, are the scattered Souls convened, and gathered to Christ. Then the scattered Thoughts, that were scattered among the Stuff of the World, are gathered to Christ, every Thought being brought in Captivity to the Obedience of Christ. Then the scattered Affections, that were lost among the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, are gathered and convened together unto Christ, as the proper Centre. O then there is a Convention of Hearts, that were scattered among other Objects, *My Son, give me thy Heart.* Then there is a Convention of Desires, to him that is the Desire of all Nations ; a Convention of Delights to him who is the Delight of God and Angels. Instead of the Desires of the Flesh, and the Delights of Sense, the Desire of their Souls comes to be towards him, and the Remembrance of his Name, saying, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee ? &c.* O, are there not here dead and dry Bones scattered about the Mouth of the Grave, dead and dry Hearts and Affections scattered about the Mouth of Hell ? O, What Need of a Gathering ?

3dly,

3dly, It supposes Rejection, and imports Reception. The natural State is a State, wherein the Man is rejected of God, forsaken of God; he hath forsaken God, and God hath forsaken him. But when God gathers the People to *Shiloh*, he receives them into Favour, *Isa liv. 7. For a small Moment have I forsaken thee, but with great Mercy will I gather thee; that is, I will love thee freely, and receive thee graciously.*

4thly, It supposes Separation, and imports Union. The natural State is a State of Separation from God, wherein the Man is like the Prodigal in a far Country, far from God, and far from Christ, and far from Grace; Aliens from the Commonwealth of *Israel*, and Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World, *Eph. ii. 12.* There is an infinite moral Distance, as well as natural, betwixt God and them. The Wall of Separation is such, as none but God can pull down; which he must do, when he gathers the People to *Shiloh*. And hence, in gathering Sinners, he not only preaches Peace to them that are afar off, but, in Christ Jesus, they that were afar off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ; They that were separate from God, and without a Head, since the first *Adam* fell, are gathered together to God, under a new Head, the second *Adam*, and unite to him, *Eph. i. 10.* It is called, A Gathering together into one, all things in Christ. They are thus unite to God, and One among themselves in Christ. This Union is by the Bond of the Holy Spirit, and Instrumentality of Saving-Faith: And the gathered Soul becomes one Building with Christ, whereof Christ is the Foundation; one Temple, one Body, one Spirit; *He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit.*

5thly, It supposes Rebellion, and imports Subjection, Reconciliation, and Obedience. The natural State is a State of Rebellion, Alienation and Enmity: Before People are gathered to *Shiloh*, they are gathered under the Standard of the Devil, and carrying on a Rebellion against Heaven: every Man and Woman is a Rebel. The carnal Mind is Enmity

against God : Every Thought of every Man is a Rebel against God ; every Imagination of the Thought of the Heart is evil, and evil continually. Now, when God gathers People, he brings them into Subjection to his Son ; as they are unite to him as their Head, so they are subject to him as their King. This Subjection and Obedience is imported in the Original Word, as I told in the Explication. The gathered People are brought to say, Other Lords besides Thee have had Dominion over us : But now, by Thee only will we make mention of thy Name ; as the Jews said, We have no King but *Cesar*, so they are brought to say, We have no King but *Shiloh*, no Lord but the Lord Jesus, Rebellion is turned to Subjection and Obedience, and their Alienation to Amity and Love.

In a Word, *6thly*, It ~~is~~ ^{proposes} an Amission or Losing, and imports Restoration and Recovery. The natural State is a lost state : We are lost in the Rubbish of the Fall of *Adam* ; we are lost privately in that we are not what we were, in a State of Innocence and Uprightness, nor in a State of Friendship and Fellowship with God, nor in a State of Power, Strength and Ability to do God's Will ; we have forfeit all this by our Sin and Fall, *Rom. iii. 23.* *All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.* We are lost positively, in that we are that which we should not be, even filthy Sinners, and guilty Criminals : Filthy, and so are Children of Disobedience, *Eph. ii. 3.* Guilty, and so are called Children of Wrath, *Eph. ii. 3.* Our Bodies and all their Members are corrupted, which is called the Filthiness of the Flesh : our Souls and all their Faculties are corrupted, this is the Filthiness of the Spirit : Being filthy and guilty Sinners, we are positively lost. We are lost judicially, as being under a Sentence of Death, and under the Curse of the Law, *Gal. iii. 10.* The Law saith, *The Soul that sinneth shall die.* We are lost meritoriously, in that our Sins deserve Death, which is the Wages of Sin, *Rom. vi. last.* And no Wonder ; for it is a Violation of God's holy, just, and good Law, *Rom.*

vii. 12. It is a Contrariety and Contradiction to God's holy, just and good Nature. *Hab. i. 13* In a Word, we are lost in Point of Power and Ability to save and recover our selves, lost as to all Capacity in the Creature to help us: We are by Nature without Strength, *Rom. v. 6*. We are not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be, *Rom. viii. 7*. We cannot know or discern the Things of God, yet, they are Foolishness to the natural Man. *1 Cor. ii. 14*. far less can we be by any Atonement satisfy God for our Offences; therefore *the Redemption of the Soul is precious, and censeth for ever*: Thus we are every Way lost.

Now, as this is the lost State supposed, so this Gathering of lost Souls imports the Son of Man his coming to seek and save that which was lost, *Luke xix. 10*. While yet the Sinner is stout-hearted, and far from Righteousness, unwilling to be saved and gathered, like these, *Mat. xviii. 37*. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you, but you would not!* He makes Enquiry after them by his Word, by his Rod, by his Spirit, Saying as to Adam, when he made Enquiry after him, *Adam where art thou?* Man, Woman, where art thou hiding thy self? I am come to seek, and save, and gather you. And as he seeks them out by his Word, so he finds them out by his Spirit, and restores them to a State of Salvation. Thus he gathers them preparatively by the Law, formally and immediately by the Gospel, meritoriously by his Blood, procuratively by his Intercession, occasionally by his Providence, and effectually by his Spirit; drawing them with his Grace, covering them with his Righteousness, quickning, sanctifying and sealing them to the Day of Redemption. But how he gathers, may come to be more particularly shown upon the Fourth Head. Only so much for the Remarks I promised anent the Nature and Import of this Gathering.

SECOND HEAD.

The *Second* general Head proposed, was, To shew who are the People of whom it is said, The Gathering of the People shall be to him. Why, in general, by the People you're to understand the *Gentiles*, *Rom. xv. 11.* and therefore here is a Door of Faith open to us, to gather in by it unto *Shiloh*: For the Promise is to us, whose Forefathers were as black and blinded *Pagans* as any in the World; To us is the Word of this Salvation sent, that the gathering of the People shall be to *Shiloh*. And here is Encouragement to us to gather into him by Faith; here is a Foundation of Faith for all the People that hear this Gospel; God says, The Gathering of the People shall be to Christ the Messias, insomuch that whoever of all the People shall be perswaded to gather in under his Wings, they shall be welcomed to him, and saved by him. Why, says One, It may be I'm none of the People here meant, none of the Elect that shall be effectually gathered; and therefore my Attempting to come to him may be vain. In Answer hereunto, you would consider, that there are two distinct Questions here, namely, 1. Whom he designs in his Decree? 2. Whom he defines in his Word to be the Persons that shall gather? And we would consider which of these especially is proposed in the Gospel for our Encouragement in gathering unto *Shiloh*. As to the *First*, Whom he designs in his Decree to be gathered? These are indeed the Elect, who are said to be chosen in Christ before the Foundation of the World, *Eph. i. 4.* They are said to be predestinate; and whom he did predestinate, them he also called, *Rom. viii. 30.* They are said to be given to Christ; and, *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me*, *John vi. 37.* and, *All that are ordained to eternal Life, shall believe*, *Acts xiii. 48.* The Election shall obtain, *Rom. xi. 7.* And indeed, if God had not in his eternal Purpose designed to gather some, none at all would be gathered. Now, I think it is observable, that in all these Places, where God's Design

Design of gathering the Elect to him is mentioned, it is readily brought in either as an Encouragement to them that are gathered, that they may have the Comfort of their Election from Eternity ; or as an Encouragement to Ministers that are Gatherers, that they may know their Labour shall not be without Success ; or else as a Check and a Blow to these that are final-Rejecters of Christ, and refuse to be gathered to him : But never is it brought in for a Discouragement to any People in the World to gather unto *Shiloh* ; hence to the *Jews*, that obstinately and finally rejected Christ, he says, *John vi. 36, 37.* Ye will not come ; but know to your Confusion, that all that the Father hath given me, shall come. But that none may be hereupon discouraged, he says, whosoever comes, he will in no ways cast out . Where, as he shuts the Door upon final Rejecters, so he opens the Door to all Comers, that they may flock in to him ; and the rather because it is impossible they can know their Election of God, till once they come and gather to Christ. It is Devilish Reasoning therefore to say, I know not if I be an Elect, and therefore I need not come to Christ ; for it is Divine Reasoning rather to say, I know not my Election, therefore I'll come to him that I may know it, since it cannot possibly be known other ways. Election is in Christ, *Eph. i. 4.* *We are chosen in him* ; and therefore out of Christ it cannot be seen. But, If I be not elected, say you, I will not get Grace to come. Indeed if you have no Will to come, you have no Grace to come ; and if you have no Will to come, whom can you blame for your Enmity but your selves, that will not come to Christ ? Will you complain you have not Grace to come, and yet reject the Gospel of Grace, that only can make you willing ? O then, *Why will you die, O House of Israel ?* But, Sir, Is it not true, that all will not be gathered, and therefore may be not me ? Well, but is it not as true, that many shall be gathered, and therefore why not you ? Is there

there any irritant Clause in the Gospel, excluding you from gathering to *Shiloh* among the rest? Non-Election can be no Hinderance to you, if a lying Devil and deceitful Heart do not make it so; for it is a Secret you're not concerned with: It is a secret Thing that belongs to God, *Deut. xxix. 29.* Your Business is to notice, what belongs to you, namely, what Warrant you have from the Word for your Gathering unto *Shiloh*. When the Gospel-Call is among your Hands, it belongs not to you to demur upon that Question, *Whom he designs in his Decree?* But it belongs to you to answer to your Name in the 3d Question, namely, *whom he designs in his Word to be the Persons that should gather, and shall be gathered, to Shiloh?* And that all may press themselves in upon him, without Fear of Presuming when they are gathering to him, they are defined by the most general Terms, namely, the People, *To him shall the gathering of the People be.* And that none may have any Reason to think that they are cast out, but that all and every one may be encouraged to venture their perishing Souls upon Christ, I shall shew what Sort of People are here meant.

(1.) It is a Gathering of Pagan People and Heathens that is here meant. *Shiloh shall come, and the gathering of the People to him;* accordingly Christ came; that the Gentiles might be gathered, and might glorify God for his Mercy; he came to the Jews for the Good of the Gentiles, see *Rom. xv. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.* And now for accomplishing of these Promises, he allows us to preach among you Gentiles *the unsearchable Riches of Christ.* This is a Part of the Mystery of Godliness, Christ preached among the Gentiles, *1 Tim. iii. 16.* It was a Mystery to the Jews and primitive Christians, when Christ was first preached among the Gentiles, *Rom. xi. 17, 18.* Why, the Gentiles were the Uncircumcision, they were abominable Outcasts, whose very entering into the Temple was enough to pollute it. They were Strangers and Aliens: But now God declares in the Gospel, That

That he will justify the Uncircumcision thro' Faith, *Rom. iii. 30.* And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen thro' Faith, preached the Gospel before to *Abraham*, saying, *In thee shall all Nations be blessed*, *Gal. iii. 18.* The Gentiles here meant were called Dogs, and the Jews were called the Children; hence said Christ to the Woman of *Canaan*, when trying her, *It is not meet to take the Childrens Bread, and cast it to Dogs. Without are Dogs*, *Rev. xxii. 15.* but such Dogs have been gathered, *1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.* *Such were some of you, &c.* Thus the People that may and shall be gathered are defined, they are Gentiles, Uncircumcised, Heathens, Dogs; and if that be a Description of you, Man, Woman, then the Promise concerns you, and you're called to embrace it with Application.

(2.) It is a *Gathering* of graceless and ungodly People that is here meant. Tho' he makes them Gracious and Godly when once he hath gathered them; yet, before they be gathered, and while he is seeking to gather them to himself, they are Graceless and Ungodly, *Mark ii. 17.* *I came not to call the Righteous but Sinners to Repentance:* And indeed if he would except Sinners, he would except all Mankind, and call none at all, for all have sinned; therefore say not, you're a Sinner, and therefore cannot be of that Number to whom this Word of Grace belongs; for if you be a sinful Creature of *Adam's* Family, we are charged to hold out the Word of Salvation to you, *Go preach the Gospel to every Creature*, *Mark xvi. 15.*

(3.) It is a *Gathering* of the most sinful People that ever were, that's here meant. Christ (say you) may gather Sinners, but none so gross as me: Therefore I tell you, that even the grossest of Sinners are included in this *Gathering*; hence the stout-hearted People are encouraged to come to him, *Isa. xlvi. 12, 13.* *Hearken, ye stout-hearted, and far from Righteousness, I bring near, &c.* Hearken to his Reasoning, *Isa. i. 18.* *Tho' your Sins be as Scarlet, &c.* Why says he thus, but that the greatest and most guilty Sinner may not be discouraged.

Encouraged from gatherings about the Throne of infinite Grace? Hence neither the cruel Massacres and cursed Sorcery of Manasseh, nor the Blasphemy and Persecution of Paul, did exclude them from obtaining Mercy and being gathered to Shiloh; yea, the Jews that murdered the Lord of Glory, see them both called and converted, Acts ii. 41.

(4.) It is a *Gathering* of diseased People that is here meant, *Mark ii. 17.* When *Shiloh* comes, it is to *gather* the Sick and Diseased about him for healing them, *They that be whole need not the Physician, but they that are sick:* Multitudes gathered about him to touch him, and, as many as touched him, were made whole. All that are sick are called to come to him, and all that want the Physician. We need not understand it of these that are sensibly sick and see their Need, such only will indeed come; but it is true without a Figure, *That all that are really sick, and stand in need of a Physician, ought to come.* Now, what is your Disease, Man, Woman? For the Physician is come here to *gather* all diseased Folk about his Hand, that he may get the Glory of healing them. Is Darknes and Ignorance your Disease? Behold, *Shiloh* is come to be a *Light to lighten the Gentiles.* Is Deadness your Disease? Behold, *He is come to give Life, and to give it more abundantly.* Is Blindness your Disease? *He is come to open the Eyes of the Blind.* Is Hardness of Heart your Disease? *He is come to take away the Heart of Stone, and give the Heart of Flesh.* Whatever be the Disease, let the *Gathering* of diseased People be to him. If your Disease be Unbelief, so as you cannot for your Life elicit on A& of Faith, He hath the Spirit of Faith to give for curing that. If your Disease be Impenitency, so as you cannot repent of one Sin, He hath the Spirit of Repentance to give for curing of that. If your Disease be Enmity and Hatred against God and Christ, He hath the Spirit of Love to give for curing that. If your Disease be Carnality, so as your Thoughts and Affections are carnal and fleshly, He hath the Spirit of Holiness to give

give for curing that. If your Disease be Weakness, that you cannot think, you cannot act, you cannot pray, he hath the Spirit of Power to give for curing that. If your Disease be Error and Delusion, as well as Dimness and Confusion, he hath the Spirit of Truth to give, to lead you into all Truth. If your Disease be Security, fearing nothing, but sleeping in the Arms of the Devil, destitute of all Grace, filled with all Atheism and Blasphemy, and such Unconcernedness and Indifference, that no Arguments in the World can awaken you; Behold, *Shiloh* is come, who is the Resurrection and the Life, having the Spirit of all Grace to give, *Isa. xlii. 1. Behold my Servant, &c. I have put my Spirit upon him, &c.* There is one Disease, called the unpardonable Sin, which the Man that is under would never so much as wish to be cured of, abstracting from that, I know no Disease excluded out of the Mediator's Commission. Whatever be the Disease then, of which you would wish and need to be cured, if you be among the Number of diseased People, that is the People of which the Gathering must be to *Shiloh*.

(5.) It is a Gathering of distracted People and mad Fools. This is set forth in the Parable of the Prodigal, who played the Fool and Mad-man, till he came to himself, and came home to his Father, who, notwithstanding of his former Madness and Folly, kindly received and entertained him, *Luke xv. from v. 17.* What is all the People in the World but a Company of mad Fools, and beside themselves, feeding upon Swines Husks, sensual Pleasures, and lying Vanities? Yet of such People is the gathering to *Shiloh*. Therefore, O Sinner, do not exclude your self from the Benefits of this Promise, tho' you have been carrying like One that hath been out of his Wits all your Days. Some in the World are called Wits, and think themselves so, who yet are mad and out of their Wits, so long as they do not think of gathering to *Shiloh*, in whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, and whq of God is made unto us Wisdom.

(6,) It is a Gathering of imprisoned People that is here meant ; for *Shiloh* is come to proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the Opening of the Prison to them that are bound, *Isa. lxi. 1.* Now, what Sort of a Prison are you in, Man? This Word of Salvation is to you. Turn ye to your strong Hold, ye Prisoners of Hope, *Zech. ix. 12.* The People that are to be gathered to *Shiloh*, are designed Prisoners ; and if Prisoner be your Name and Designation, be it never such a deep, dark and dreadful Prison, here is a Door of Hope for you. Is your Prison-door barr'd and bolted, so as no Man nor Angel can open? Behold, he proclaims the Opening of the Prison to them that are bound. When he in the Gospel-proclamation is saying, Open Prison doors, open, open ; O take hold of his Strength, and invite his Power to be put forth, and you shall find all the Bars shall be broken to Pieces. To give him Employment to open your Prison, is one of the Ways of gathering to him. Do you look upon your self as a Prisoner in the furthest Nook, hidden in the deepest and darkest Hole of the Prison? Behold the gathering Hand of him that can save to the uttermost, can reach to the furthest Nook of the Prison, and bring you forth, so as your Name shall be called Sought out and Found out, *Isa. lxii. last.* But, on this Subject, see my Notes on *Isa. xlii. 6.* Now, if the People to be gathered to *Shiloh* be of that Sort, if it be a Gathering of Pagans to make them Christians, a Gathering of graceless People to make them gracious, a Gathering of great Sinners to make them great Saints, a Gathering of diseased People that they may be made whole, a Gathering of Fools and Mad-men that they may be made wise, a Gathering of Prisoners that they may be made free ; if this be the Designation of these People of whom the Gathering shall be to *Shiloh*, O then, is your Name and Designation touched at here? What hinders but you put in for a Share of this gathering Grace? By what Clause are you excluded, if you be one of the People here mentioned, Man, Woman? And why will you ex-
clude

clude your selves from coming to Christ ? The Gospel excludes you not, for it names you in a Manner; and you should answer to your Name, saying, Lord, here I am: I find I'm mentioned among these of whom the Gathering shall be to *Shiloh*; therefore, behold I come to him, let my Soul and all its Faculties be centred on him.

But, in case you think that I have miss'd your Name, I must tell you, that all that are called by the Gospel of Christ are allowed to gather under his Wings, and it is by the free universal Call given to all the People to whom the Gospel comes: It is by this, that God gathers all his Chosen in to Christ; and the Promise, given forth indefinitely to all the People, is a Ground of Encouragement to them all, to come to *Shiloh* by Faith: Therefore says the Apostle to them whom he was calling to come to Christ whom they had crucified, *Acts ii. 39. The Promise is to you and to your Children, and to all them that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.* And here, as all that are a far off are called, so more particularly there are two Sorts of People called, that some do not dream to be so, namely, 1. They that exclude themselves. 2. They that are excluded by Men, they are included in the Call.

1st, They that exclude themselves; and you'll find, they are most particularly called, who are most ready to exclude themselves. They that are weary and heavy laden, under a Sense of Sin, and Apprehension of God's Wrath, are ready to exclude themselves; therefore they are particularly called, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you Rest.* Matth. xi. 28. I do not confine the Sense of these Words indeed to the humbled and convinced; for I think that even these that are wearying themselves in pursuing Vanities, and living contentedly under a heavy Load of Sin or Guilt, or wearying themselves with a Load of legal and unprofitable Service, are called also by that Text to come to Christ, in whom alone they can find that Rest and Satisfaction which they are vainly seeking in other Things.

Now,

Now, tho' I judge it would straiten the Gospel-call there, to confine it only to the first Sense; yet, I reckon the first to be so much imported, that seeing such Persons as find a Load of Sin and Wrath upon them, are readiest to exclude themselves, therefore they are expressly called. Thus again, they that see themselves destitute of all good Qualifications, having no Money nor Money-worth, nothing but Poverty, and Want and Worthlessness; these are ready to exclude themselves, as being broken and lost; therefore they are particularly encouraged, as *Ezek. xxxiv. 16.* Again,

2dly, They that are excluded by Men; yea, whom Ministers are ready to exclude, yet the Call reaches them. Men are ready to exclude from the Call of the Gospel, such as refuse the Call, and pour Contempt upon it, *viz.* Mockers and Scorners; yet we find such are called, *Prov. i. 22, 23.* Men are ready to exclude from the Call of the Gospel, or the Invitation to come and gather unto *Shiloh*, such as are not sensible of the Want of him, and think themselves happy enough without him. Men exclude unsensible Sinners, that have no thrifty Desire after Christ, but are satisfying themselves with other Things: Yet these are particularly called, as you may see, in these Two Passages, *Isa. lv. 1, 2. Ho, every one that thirsteth, &c.* Now, you may notice, that the Thirsting here is no desirable Quality, it was a Thirsting for that which did not satisfy, and a Labouring for that which was not Bread; and yet they are invited to come to him, as to One that hath a Variety of Supply, Water to refresh, Wine to cherish, Milk to nourish; and all offered freely, without Money and without Price: So that here, even these that are thirsting after their Lusts, and after the World, and unsatisfying Vanities, are called. See also, *Rev. iii. 18. I counsel thee to buy of me Gold tried in the Fire that thou mayest be rich, white Raiment, &c.* But who are they that are thus called? Even these, that, in the preceeding Verse, said they were rich, and increased with Goods, and stood in Need of nothing; even these that had no Sense of their

their Need of Christ: True, these that do not see their Need will not come; but whether they see it or not, they are called and obliged to come. Now, Men are ready to exclude from the Call these that are unhumbled, unsensible Sinners, that are not convinced of their Sin and Misery; but because God's free and gracious Call can effectually work upon unsensible, stupid, brutish Sinners, as well as upon the Objects that we reckon most prepared; therefore Sinners want of Sense, and due Conviction, is brought in as a Reason why they are called to come to Christ: *I counsel thee to buy of me tried Gold, white Raiment, Eye-salve*; why, Because thou sayest, *I am rich, &c.* and knowest not that thou art wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. Let none think then, because they do not see their wretched and undone State without Christ, and therefore they are not concerned with this Call: Nay, therefore you are concerned, says the Spirit of God; and you may object what you will, but you will not get it put by you. Shift this Call as you will, it will rise up in Judgment against you, if you do not answer it. If you are an unsensible Sinner, not knowing that you are poor and miserable, thinking that you are rich enough already, and does not see that you are wretched, blind and naked, you have the more Need to come to Christ, that he may give you Eye-salve, that you may see your Misery without him, and your Remedy in him. Thus we are warranted to open the Mouth of the Gospel-Ner: And I hope, by this Time you may see, that you are all concerned with this Call. And, what do you think we intend by this universal Call? Why, there is One of Two Things will follow; either, to the Glory of God's Justice we get you all left inexcusable; or to the Glory of his Mercy, we get you all gathered into Christ; and if there be some of both Sorts, then both these Ends are reached. But, O to see the last especially, even a *Happy Gathering of the People to Shiloh*! Thus you see who are the People, of whom it is said, the Gathering

thering shall be to the *Messias*. None are excluded, all are invited, and warranted to assemble to him; and when God says, *To him shall the Gathering of the People be*, all the People should say *Amen*.

THIRD HEAD.

The *Third* Thing proposed, was, To shew to whom shall the Gathering of the People be; or, what is the gathering Place, and where is the Gathering to be. Here we may inquire, *1st*, What Place there is in Christ for the People to gather to? *2dly*, In what Respect the Gathering of the People is to him?

First, What Place there is in Christ for the People to gather unto: Christ is the Temple to which we ought to resort; he is the only Refuge and Sanctuary of poor miserable Souls, and there is Room enough in this Temple and Sanctuary for all that shall gather in to it. In general, the very Person of Christ is the gathering Place, the meeting Place, to which People should gather: They that come to Christ, are to close with his Person, and then they are interested in all his Purchase; hence the many Calls to come to him, to receive him, to rest on him, to trust in him, to flee to him, and so to God in him, for a God in Christ, is the Throne of Grace, to which the Gathering of the People should be, *Heb. iv. 16. Let us come boldly, &c.* More particularly, there is a sixfold Place or Chamber in the Lord Jesus that I shall mention, for the gathering of the People into. (1.) There is the Chamber of his *Righteousness*: No Doubt this is one of the Chambers spoken of *Song i. 4. The King hath brought me into his Chambers*; and *Isa. xxvi. 20. Come, my People, enter into your Chambers, and hide yourself, till the Indignation be overpast*. Indeed there is no escaping of divine Wrath and Indignation, but by gathering in to this Chamber of Christ's Righteousness. It is one of the most splendid and well adorned Chambers that ever was; for it is hung with the red and white hangings which God himself wrought; I mean, with the fair and white Obedience, and the red bloody Suffering

and Satisfaction of the Son of God, guilty Sinners cannot be saved, without a Law fulfilling, Justice satisfying Righteousness, but when they gather in to this Chamber, they are absolutely safe, and may say, *Surely in the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength, Isa. xlv. 24. The Lord is well pleased for his Righteousness Sake;* insomuch, that none can lay any Thing to their Charge, *Rom. viii. 33.* They may laugh at all Challenges, while they shut their Chamber-Door upon themselves: They are then chambered like *Noah* in the Ark, which was pitched within and without, *Gen. vi. 14.* so as no Drop of Water could come in; so here. (2.) There is the Chamber of his Name, for the gathering of the People into, *Prov. xviii. 10. The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, to which the Righteous run and are safe.* He is the Strength as well as the Righteousness of *Israel*; and to this Chamber, in which there is everlasting Strength, we ought to throng. Many a Closer there is in this Chamber: If we should mention all his Titles, all his Offices, all his Relations, all his divine Attributes and Perfections, which belong to his Name, there would be no End of telling; but every one of them, and any one of them, is a fit Place for gathering to: Every Corner of this Chamber is perfumed, insomuch that none are gathered into it, but they are ravished with the sweet Smell thereof, *Because of the Savour of thy good Ointment, thy Name is as Ointment poured forth: His Name is Christ the Anointed,* and every Name he hath is an anointed Name; He is an anointed *Jésus*, an anointed Surety, an anointed King: And when any of his Names are cleared up, and opened, it is like the Opening of a Box of Ointment; it is like the Opening of a Chamber-Door, full of all ravishing Perfumes (3.) There is the Chamber of his Bosom, for the gathering of the People unto, *Isa. xl. 11.* He gathers them with his Arms, and carries them in his Bosom, his kind and merciful Bosom and Bowels, which yearn towards Sinners, *Fer. xxxi. 20.* This is a large Chamber, *Jam. v. 11.* The Lord is very pitiful and of tender Mercy; the

Original is Πολυ σπλῆχνος, He is of large Bowels, or full of Bowels; there is Place enough in these Bowels of infinite Mercy for Sinners to gather in into; and this Chamber of his Bosom is standing open for all Comers. The Chamber-Door of his Heart is open, that the Gathering of the People may be in to it; and as it is a large Chamber, that can contain you all, being as broad and wide as the infinite Mercy of a God in Christ, so it is a warm Chamber: O it is a warm and heartsome Chamber, to get in to the Heart and Bosom of Christ. They that gather in there, will sit at the warm Fireside of God's Love and Grace in Christ; their Hearts are warmed, and made to burn within them, *Luke xxiv. 32. Did not our Hearts burn within us, when he talked with us by the Way, and opened to us the Scriptures?* While he was opening the Scripture, he was stirring up the Fire; they were in the Chamber of his warm Heart and Bosom, and it made him to have a warm Heart too; surely, Believer, you know what a sweet Chamber that is. (4.) There is the Chamber of his *Fulness*, to which the Gathering of the People should be. This is a Chamber, that comprehends all the rest of the Chambers within it; but because it is so notable and glorious, we name it among the rest. It is the best furnish'd Chamber that ever you heard tell of, for all the Fulness of the Godhead is in it. It pleased the Father, that in him should all Fulness dwell, *Col. i. 19. & ii. 9, 10. In him dwells all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him.* To this Chamber should all poor Beggars and Dvyour Sinners, that have lost their Stock in the first Adam, gather together, that out of his Fulness they may receive Grace for Grace, *John i. 16.* In this Chamber are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, all the Treasures of Grace and Glory, all the Treasures of God's Perfections, and all the Treasures of the Spirit's Graces: Your great Want is the Want of God; and you may find him in this Chamber: Your next want is the Want of Grace; and whatever Grace you want, be it Faith,

Faith, Repentance, Love, or whatever else, it is lying treasured up in this Chamber : If you want Pardon, Purity, Happiness, Holiness, all the Stock of Riches that you can imagine, to make you up for ever and ever, is treasured up in this Chamber ; and behold the Chamber-Door is open to you all, while we preach among you Gentiles the unsearchable Riches of Christ : Let every Soul here be like Beggars gathering about this Door. (5.) There is the Chamber of his *Covenant*, to which the Gathering of the People should be ; when God gathers People into it, he is said to shew them his *Covenant*, *Psal.* xxv. 14. and in shewing his *Covenant*, he shews some divine Secrets to them. When the People gather in to this Chamber, they are said to take hold of his *Covenant*, *Isa.* lvi. 4, 6. This Chamber is remarkable, for the Wells that are in the Midst of it. There is both a Well for washing, and a Well for drinking ; and both are open, that the People may gather together to them. The Well for washing, is the Blood of the *Covenant* ; and that is the Fountain open for Sin and for Uncleanness, *Zech.* xiii. 1. It is just the boundless bottomless Sea of the Redeemer's Blood, which cleanses from all Sin ! This Fountain is open, that all guilty filthy polluted People may gather to it, and be washed. The Well for drinking is not only that same Blood of Christ, which is Drink indeed, but all the Blessings of the *Covenant*, and all the Promises of the *Covenant* ; to all or every one of which, People should gather, and draw Water out of these Wells of Salvation with Joy, *Isa.* xii. 3. Here is the Well of Water springing up to everlasting Life, *John* iv. 14. and all the People are invited to gather to it ; Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the Water of Life freely, *Rev.* xxii. 17. In this Chamber there is the best of Cheer, Bread enough, and to spare, all spiritual Blessings of heavenly Places in Christ Jesus ; and this Chamber, and all the Cheer that is in it, whereof Christ himself is the All. it is dedicated of God for the Use of the People, that their Gathering may be to it, *Isa.* xlii. 6. *I'll give thee for a Covenant*

of the People. (6.) There is the Chamber of his Palace, for the Gathering of the People into : By his Palace, I mean, his Church ; and by his Church, I mean, both his Church militant on Earth, and triumphant in Heaven.

As for the Church Militant, that is the Palace of the great King, *Psal. xlv. 15.* there he desires to dwell *Psal. lxxviii. 16.* It is his House, where he would have the Gathering of the People to be ; therefore he calls it a *House of Prayer for all People, Isa. lvi. 7.* and all are to flee unto it, *Isa. ii. 2.* The Ordinances and Provisions of Christ's House are in a peculiar Manner for the Entertainment of the People, and the Stewards of the House have a special Commission to invite all Sorts of Sinners, even these that have played the Prodigal and the Fool in the Way of Sin, to come in to it, *Prov. ix. 3.* *Who so is simple, let him turn in hither : As for him that hath no Understanding, Wisdom says to him, Come eat of my Bread, and drink of the Wine which I have mingled. Luke xiv. 21.* Go quickly (says the Master of the House) to the Streets and Lanes of the City, and bring in hither the Poor, the Blind, the Maimed and the Halt ; yea, go to the High-ways, v. 23. and Hedges, and compel them to come in, that my House may be filled. It is a Pity indeed that ever the People should be discouraged from gathering in to the Lord's House, while the Provisions of the House are mixed with unwholesome Food of corrupt or erroneous Doctrine ; while the Stewards of the House do turn it to a Den of Thieves and Robbers, robbing the People of their Christian Privileges ; and while the Servants of the House do fall by the Ears, and begin to smite their Fellow-servants, because the Lord of the House is away, and delays his Coming ; while, in a Word, the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the House is out of Order, and in great Confusion, not garnish'd like the Palace of the great King. This indeed is Matter of Lamentation, and will be so, till the King of Zion, the Master of the House himself come by the Power of his Spirit,

Spirit, and set Matters right : And, as the Prophet says, *Hag. ii. 7. I will shake all Nations, and the Desire of all Nations shall come ;* so, before the Lord comes in a glorious Manner to his House, we have Reason to expect he wil give the House a terrible Shake, and make it tremble. But in the mean Time, let not the Disorders of the House hinder the Gathering of the People to it : for at best to the lower Chambers of our King's Palace will never be so clean as the upper Chamber in the higher House. The Church militant will never be in a state of Perfection here ; only study you to keep ay the cleanest and best Side of the House, like sick People betaking themselves to the purest Air. But withal, let never your Gathering to his House or Ordinances content you, without the Presence of the Master of the House, and the Lord of Ordinances, so as you may have it to say, that not only you *was brought to the Banqueting-house,* but also, *his Banner over you was Love.*

As to the Church triumphant, that is his glorious Palace, his higher House, of which Christ says, *John xiv. 2. In my Father's House there is many Mansions,* thither all that have been gathered graciously, will be gathered gloriously, *with Gladness and Rejoicing will they be brought, and shall enter into the King's Palace,* *Psal. xiv. 15.* This is, by Way of Eminency, the Ivory Palaces, where all his Garments smell of Aloes, Myrrhe and Cassia, where the People gathered to him, *will be like him, for they shall see him as he is :* Where they will be for ever with him, *in whose Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at his right Hand Pleasures for evermore :* As he that drinks of the Ocean, tho' his Thirst be never so great and insatiable, yet leaves it as full and flowing as ever ; so these that drink of the Ocean of these heavenly Pleasures, will find the Fulness of Joy never ebbing, but ever flowing thro' all Eternity. Christ himself will be the Heaven of Heaven, and the very Temple, wherein the happy People will be gathered together. *Rev. xxi. 22. I saw no Temple there : But the Lord God almighty, and the*

the Lamb are the Temple of it. If the Lamb be the Temple there, then the gathering of the People there must be to him. Thus you see, what Place there is in Christ, and what Chambers for the gathering of the People to.

The *second* Question, upon this Head, was to show in what Respect the gathering of the People is to him, or in what Capacity. The Scripture is very copious, and elegant in setting forth the various Respects, wherein this gathering of the People to *Shiloh* may take Place; and that, for conveying a due Apprehension thereof to our Souls, it is set forth by what takes Place, sometimes among rational Creatures, among Sensitives, among Vegetables and among inanimate Things; and it is not for Nought, that the Scripture is so copious this Way, that our Faith may have Room and Liberty to act upon Christ, in whatever Respect he is represented.

1st, From Rationals; while we view Political or Oeconomical Affairs among Men, or whatever Station or Relation they are said to be in, or Actions they are said to perform, by these we will find this Matter represented unto us. Hence our gathering to *Shiloh* is like the gathering of Scholars to a Teacher, or of Disciples to a Master, that we may be taught of him; and he is therefore called the Non-such Teacher, *Job 36. 22. Who teacheth like him?* Man's teaching reacheth the Ear, but his teaching reacheth the Heart: Man's teaching may work upon the Capacity, where it is, but his teaching can work a Capacity where it is not. O let all the People gather to his School, who is the great Prophet, &c. Again, it is like a gathering of pursued Malefactors to a Refuge: It is a *Flying for Refuge to the Hope set before us*, Heb. vi. 18. To gather to him, is to say by Faith, with *David*, I flee to thee to hide me, to hide me with thy Wings, with thy Blood, with thy Righteousness, from the Wrath of God, and from the Curse of the Law. Again, it is like the gathering of Rebels to a Sovereign, casting down their Arms, and owning him to be their only lawful King & Liege-Lord:

Lord: Gathered Souls put the Crown upon King Je-
 sus his Head, saying, *Other Lords have had Dominion o-*
ver us ; but now, O let the King of Glory come in !
Psal. xxiv. 7. Let him reign, &c. It is like the gather-
 ing of Wanderers to the right Way Home. *I am the*
Way, says Christ. It is like the gathering of weary
 Travellers to an Inn, or weary Labourers to a resting
 Place : *Come to me, all ye that are weary, and I will*
give you Rest. It is a gathering of Guests to a Feast,
Matth. xxii. 10. and of Strangers to their Home. that
they may be no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-
citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God, *Epha*
ii. 19. Before a Man come to Christ, he is Abroad in
 a far Country ; but when ever he comes to Christ,
 he is at Home. It is a gathering of Children to a Fa-
 ther, to be pitied as a Father pities his Children, *Psal.*
ciii. 13. It is a gathering of Brethren to their elder
 Brother, as *Joseph's* Brethren did to their younger, that
 they might be supplied by him, and live upon him.
 It is a gathering of Beggars to a Store-house, that
 they may be enriched ; Of Captives to a Redeemer,
 that they may be liberate ; of Debtors to a Security,
 that they may be ransomed ; *Be Surety for thy Servant*
for Good ; of Lepers to a Laver, that they may be
 cleansed ; *purge me with Hyssop, &c.* It is a gathering
 as broken Merchants, to a free Market : What a ga-
 thering of People will be to a Fair or Market ? But
 they are not all Buyers that come to Markets, far
 less that come to the Market of Ordinances ; how-
 ever the Market is free, we may buy without Money
 and without Price. The Wares are precious, *tried Gold,*
white Raiment, Eye-salve, and the Pearl of great Price. All
 Things are Nothing to this Pearl ; and therefore,
 when we sell our All to buy this Pearl, yet we get
 it for Nothing. Right gathering to Christ, is to come
 to his Market, and take all his Wares for Nothing.
 It is a gathering of Members to an Head ; *for he is*
the Head of the Body the Church, *Col. i. 18.* From
 the Head is derived to the Body all the Light, Life,
 Beauty, Motion, Sympathy, Protection, Provision,
 Supply

Supply of Good, and Prevention of Evil. It is a gathering of fugitive Servants to their Masters ; of Clients to an Advocate to plead their Cause. It is a gathering of drowning Men to an Ark, to save their Lives ; and a gathering of Patients to a Physician, to heal their Diseases. Lord, says the gathered Soul, my Disease is mortal and incurable ; I'll die of this Disease, if thou do not heal me. Well, says Christ, this Sickness is not unto Death ; I can cure the Disease of Death it self, spiritual Death. Lord, says another, my Disease is a lingering Disease, it is an Halt and Lameness, that I cannot so much as come to the Physician for Healing, and I am like to go halting to the Grave, under a certain Sore, that no Body knows of. Is that your Disease, Woman ? Mind that Word, Mic. iv. 6. *I'll heal her that halteth* ; and be encouraged still to be about the Physician's Hands.

2dly, From Sensitives, this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh* is represented in Scripture in the following Respects. This Gathering to *Shiloh* is like the Gathering of Sheep to a Shepherd, 1 *Pet.* 2. last. *Ye were as Sheep without a Shepherd, but now are ye returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls. Other Sheep I have, that are not of this Fold, says Christ ; these also I must bring.* He must gather them, and they must be gathered, according to his Promise, *Ezek.* xxxiv. 11. 12. *Isa.* xl. 11, O wandering Sheep, here is the Fold. It is like the Gathering of Doves to their Windows, *Isa.* lx. 8. Who are these that fly as a Cloud, as Doves to their Windows ? The Wounds of Christ, the Holes of the Rock of Ages, the Promises sealed with his Blood, and all his Offices, are the Windows ; and to gather to him, is to fly to these Windows, and make your Nest in the Rock. It is like the Gathering of Fishes into a Net, *Mat.* xiii. 47. The Kingdom of Heaven, or the Gospel, is likened unto a Net cast into the Sea, gathering of every Kind : O when the Gospel-net is spread, do not swim away : It may be your Thoughts are swimming in the Air, when they

they should be gathered about the Mouth of the Net. Sometimes it is likened to the Gathering of Chickens under the Wings of a Hen, *Mat. xxiii. 37. Luke xiii. 34. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, but ye would not ! O the Wings of his Grace, the Wings of Righteousness, the Wings of his Merit, the Wings of his Mercy are stretched ! If we will not be gathered, the silly Chickens will witness against us ; for they gather at the Clock of the Hen under her Wings. Again, it is like the gathering of Eagles to their Prey, Mat. xxiv. 28. Where the Carcase is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together ; And, Luke xvii. 37. Where the Body is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together. Whither should the Eagles go, but to the Prey ? And, whither should the Soul go, but to Christ, who hath the Words of eternal Life ? Christ's Flesh and Blood is the Carcase, which, like hungry Eagles, we should be gathering unto ; for his Flesh is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed.*

3dly, From Vegetables, this gathering of the People to *Shiloh* is represented, in the following Respects ; It is like the gathering of Wheat into a Barn, *Mat. iii. 12. He will gather his Wheat into his Garner. Mat. xiii. 30. Gather the Wheat into my Barn :* God will not lose a Grain of his Wheat ; he will not only gather it to the Barn to be kept, but the Granary to be purified. It is like the Gathering of Grafts into a Branch, *John xv. 5. I am the Vine ye are the Branches, &c.* When God gathers Souls to himself, he takes a Branch of the old *Adam*, cuts it off from the old Stock, and ingrafts it into Christ, from whom, as the everlasting Root, it derives all the Sap of Grace, all the Fruits of Righteousness. It is like the Gathering of Plants into a Garden, or a Vineyard, *Isa v. 7. The Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the House of Israel, and the Men of Judah his pleasant Plant :* And these, whom he effectually gathers into his Garden, are called Trees of
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Righ-

Righteousness, the Planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified: To be gathered unto Christ, is to be planted in his House. It is like the gathering of Fruit into a Basket, or of Flowers and Lillies for Pleasure and Entertainment, *Song. vi. 2. My Beloved is gone down to his Garden, to gather Lillies*; having gathered them into his Garden, and planted them, and suffered them to grow thro' his Grace, till they be ripe, he gathers them to himself, and picks them one by one to put them in his Bosom. But again,

4thly, From inanimate Things, this Gathering of the People to Christ is represented, in the following Respects. It is a Gathering of Vessels to an Harbour; for, before the Soul be brought in to Christ, it is like a Ship tossed in a Tempest, and tumbling in the swelling Waves, like the Ship in which the Disciples were, when the Sea was tempestuous, and Christ came walking on the Sea, towards them; but when they are gathered in to Christ, then they are at Anchor in a safe Harbour, *Heb. vi. 19. Which Hope we have, as an Anchor sure and stedfast, entering within the Vail, whither the Fore-runner is for us entered*. It is a piercing, entering Anchor; for, as an Anchor will not hold a Ship firm and fast, if it only ly on the Ground, and do not pierce deep into it; so Faith will not establish the Heart, if it do not enter in to Christ, as it were, and pierce the Vail; but when once it enters here, then the Soul is at a safe Harbour, and a sure Anchor both. Again, this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh* is like the Gathering of Stones to a Building, *1 Pet. ii. 4. To whom coming as to a living Stone, disallowed indeed of Men, but chosen of God and precious; ye also, as lively Stones, are built up a spiritual House*. We are by Nature hard Stones, senseless Stones, stupid, inflexible, dull, heavy Stones, having an Heart of Stone, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26*. but God can even of these Stones raise up Children to *Abraham*, *Mat. iii. 8. Luke iii. 9*. And what does God condescend to do, when he comes to gather Singers? Behold, he comes to gather Stones! and he sends

sends us that are Ministers out to gather Stones : It was a Sin for the Man to gather Stones on the Sabbath Day ; but it would be no Sin, but a good Sabbath Work for us, if we were gathering Stones this Day, to bring them to the Chief Corner-
Stone, the sure Foundation, as Christ is called, 1 Pet ii. 6. *I sa. xxviii. 16. This is the Stone which the Builders rejected ; but the same is become the Head of the Corner.* What we translate the chief Corner Stone, some translate it the *highest*, and some the *lowest Stone* : But it is best to reconcile both, and make him both the Highest and Lowest, reaching from the first to the last ; because his Name is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and the last ; and because he is the Stone, that reaches from Earth to Heaven, from the Church militant to the Church triumphant ; he is the Corner-Stone to bring both Sides of the Building together, *Jews* and *Gentiles* into one Temple : And, *another Foundation can no Man lay*, says the Apostle, *than that is laid, which is Christ* ; to this Foundation should the Stones be gathered. *Solomon* says, *Ecc. iii. 5. There is a Time to cast away Stones, and a Time to gather Stones together.* In Allusion to this, may I say, What Sort of Time is this ? It hath long been a Time of casting away Stones, many are like cast-away Stones in the Field or Desert of Nature, hard and dead Stones ; they never gather to the living Temple, by all the gathering Means and Ordinances that ever they enjoyed : They look like Stones ready to be cast away to Hell, to be Fuel of God's Wrath ; because the Fire of his Love and Grace, manifested in the Gospel, could never melt them. O it hath been thus a Time of casting away Stones ; when it is not a gathering Time, it is a rejecting Time. But O shall we now expect a Time of gathering Stones together ! O cry for a Day of Power, a gathering Day, a gathering Time to *Scotland* again, a gathering Time to your selves ; even God's Hand of Power, for gathering Stones together to Christ the

Foundation ; and so, for gathering the People to *Shiloh*.

FOURTH HEAD.

The *Fourth* Thing proposed, was, to speak of the Manner of this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*. That which I intend under this Head, distinct from the former, is, to enquire, 1st, Into the Means of this Gathering ; 2^{dly}, The Qualities thereof. *First*, As to the Means thereof, or by what Means the Gathering to *Shiloh* is brought about. By what Means, say you, does God gather the People, or are the People gathered to Christ ? We have Warrant from Scripture to speak of these Six gathering Means. (1.) A gathering Hedge and Inclosure ; I mean, the Hedge of Providence, by which he gathers People occasionally, as Sheep within an Inclosure are gathered together, that they may not get Leave to stray. This is the thorny Hedge of Affliction, whereby the Lord stops the sinful Career of these, whom he hath amind to gather in to himself, *Hos. ii. 6. Behold I will hedge up thy Way with Thorns, and make a Wall that she shall not find her Paths.* Thus *Manasseh* was caught among the Thorns, 2 *Chro. xxxiii. 11.* And to this Purpose, says *David*, It was good for me that I was afflicted ; for before I was afflicted, I went astray, *Psal. cxix. 67.* Thus some Affliction or other many Time is made Use of, as the occasional Mean of gathering straying Souls to Christ, or some alarming Providence, as that which *Paul* met with, *Acts ix.* and the Jaylor, *Acts xvi.* when the Foundation of the Prison was shaken with an Earthquake : But this leads me to another Mean. (2.) There is a gathering Storm and Tempest, with Thunder and Lightning from Mount *Sinai*, whereby an Earthquake is raised in the Conscience, or rather a Heartquake in the Soul. By this Mean of Law-Terrors and Convictions, according to the Measure wherein it is dispensed, he gathers the People preparatively, as, by the former occasionally. This Dispensation is called a *Tempest*, *Heb. xii. 18.* accompanied with

Blackness and Darkneſs, and burning Fire : And as a blowing Storm, or beating Tempeſt, makes a Man ſain to betake himſelf to a Houſe for Shelter ; So the Storm of legal Conviction and Humiliation makes People ſain to gather unto *Shiloh*. Hence the Law is ſaid to be our Schoolmaſter, to ſchool us to Chriſt, as the Word there ſignifies, *Gal. iii. 24*. By the Law is the Knowledge of Sin, and the Conviction of Wrath ; and while the Storm of Law-Threatnings, Law-Curſes, Law-Vengeance is beating and battering on the Soul, it is ſain to cry out, What ſhall I do to be ſaved ? And where ſhall I go to be ſheltred ? Under this Diſpenſation there are Two Things that the Soul ſees, when the Law comes with Force, namely, the Spirituality of the Command, and the Severity of the Threatning. The Spirituality of the Precept diſcovered makes the Man cry, O I'm unclean, unclean. The Severity of the Threatning diſcovered makes him cry out, O I'm undone, undone. O the infinite Holineſs of God in the Precept can never be gratified by any Obedience of mine, for I'm a ſinful Beaſt. O the infinite Juſtice of God in the Threatning can never be ſatisfied by any Suffering of mine, for I'm a finite Worm ; if there be not another Shift for me, I'm loſt and gone for ever. Thus, *Rom. vii. 9*. the Soul that was alive without the Law once, now when the Commandment comes, Sin revives, and it dies, &c. (3.) As the gathering Incloſure of Providence is the occaſional Mean, and the gathering Storm and Tempeſt of Law-Conviction is the preparative Mean, ſo the gathering Trumpet of the Goſpel is the more immediate Mean. The Goſpel is the great gathering Engine of infinite Wiſdom ; for Faith comes by hearing of the joyful Sound of this Trumpet, which is like the Trumpet of the Jubilee of old, *Lev. xxv. 9*. There is the joyful Sound of Goſpel-Revelations, and good News, That Chriſt came to ſave Sinners : O, when this Sound of the Silver Trumpet reaches not only the Ear, but the Heart of the Sinner, that by the Law hath got the Knowledge and Conviction of Sin and Miſery, what a joy-

joyful Sound is it, that now he hears of the Remedy for him; that Justice is satisfied, Life is purchased, Death is destroyed, Wrath is appeased, and the Law is magnified; and God reconciled in Christ? Many a gathering Sound comes through this Gospel-Trumpet: There is a Sound of Gathering Calls, saying, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved; This is his Commandment, that ye believe*: A Sound of gathering Invitations, saying, *Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden*: A Sound of gathering Proclamations, saying, *Ho, ho, every one that thirsteth, come, &c.* A Sound of gathering Expostulations, saying, *Why will ye die? joined with Complaints, Ye will not come to me, that ye might have Life*: A Sound of gathering Counsels, saying, *I counsel thee to buy of me Gold, &c.* A Sound of gathering Intreaties and Obtestations, saying, *We beseech you in God's Name, and pray you in Christ's Stead, be ye reconciled to God.* And, Finally, A Sound of gathering Musick, and charming Melody; and as Children gather to the Sound of a Pipe, so the Lord Jesus complains, *Mt. xi. 17.* when People do not joyfully gather at the Sound thereof, *We have piped unto you, and you have not danced*; yea, such are compared to deaf Adders, that stop their Ears at the Voice of the Charmer, tho' charming never so cunningly, *Psal. lviii. 5.* O what melodious Musick in the World, is so sweet as to hear the Sound of Gospel-Promises, of Pardon to the Guilty, Purity to the Filthy, and Pity to the miserable Soul! This Trumpet hath a Sound of Peace, a Sound of Grace, a Sound of Mercy, a Sound of Glory to God in the Highest, and of Good-will towards Men; A certain Sound, in Opposition to all the legal Trumpeters, sounding forth Life and Salvation, depending upon uncertain Conditions and Qualifications on our Part: But, as says the Apostle, *1 Cor. xiv. 8.* *If the Trumpet give an uncertain Sound, who goeth forth to the Battle?* There is no Heart to go forth to the Battle of the Lord, upon such an uncertain Sound: But when the Trumpet gives a certain Sound of Victory, Peace, Life Salvation, and all, to be had only,

only, and wholly, and freely for nothing, in and through Jesus Christ, then who would not go forth, under the Standard of this Captain of Salvation, at the Sound of this Golden Trumpet? (4.) There is the gathering Wind of the Spirit. Besides the gathering Inclosure of Providence as the occasional Mean, the gathering Tempest of the Law as the preparatory Mean, and the gathering Trumpet of the Gospel as the immediate Mean; There must be a gathering Wind of the Spirit, which is the efficacious Mean; the former Means cannot be effectual without this, tho' the gathering Trumpet of the Gospel, and the gathering Wind of the Spirit are most nearly related to each other, for it is the Gospel only that is the Ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 8. It is this Wind, of which the Lord Jesus speaks, *John* iii. 8. which blows where it listeth, and is the great Efficient of Regeneration and Aggregation unto Christ. It is this Wind that gathers dead Sinners out of their Grave of Spiritual Death, *Ezek.* xxxvii. 9. *Come from the four Winds O Breath, and breathe, &c.* It is this mighty Wind that blows down the strong Holds of Satan, and casts down Imaginations, &c. gathering the Thoughts like Captives to him, 2 Cor. x. 5. It is this Wind that makes the Spices of the Believer's Garden to flow out; for this gathering Wind brings a gathering Rain with it, *Psal.* lxxii. 6, 8. *Awake, O North Wind, come thou South, blow upon my Garden, &c.* *Song* iv. last. O it is a happy Wind, that can drive a sinking Vessel to a safe Harbour, and gather perishing Sinners into a Saviour! But where is this Wind to be had, say you? Why, it is in God's Hand; 'tis said with Respect to his Kingdom of Providence, *That he hath gathered the Winds in his Fist*, *Prov.* xxx. 4. and it is true, with Respect to his Kingdom of Grace, this blessed Wind is, as it were, gathered in his Fist; and what a Man hath gathered in his Fist, he can easily distribute of it, by opening his Hand; so our God can easily distribute of the Spirit: This Wind is

his Fist, and he hath no more ado, but to open his Fist. O look to him, and cry to him, to cast a Gale of this Wind out of his Fist, a Handful of the gathering Motions of the Spirit, a Handful of the gathering Influences of this heavenly Wind, a Gale of his gathering Operations. (5.) I may add, tho' it be very sib to the former, yet it is what may give us another distinct View of the Lord's Way of gathering People; Besides the gathering Wind, there is a gathering Sun: I allude to *Psal. civ. 22.* where it is said of the young Lions, *The Sun arises, and they gather themselves together to their Dens; and Man goeth forth to his Work and Labour:* As the Rising of the Sun makes the Beasts gather to their Dens, and Men gather to their Work; so the Rising of the Sun of Righteousness, in the Manifestation of the Favour of God in Christ, makes the Lions of Hell gather to their Dens, in a Manner, and Men to gather to their Work; I mean to gather to Christ by Faith, for this is the Work of God, that ye believe in his Son, whom he hath sent. It is promised that Men shall go forth when the Sun rises, *Mal. iv. 2. The Sun of Righteousness shall arise, and ye shall go forth and grow up as Calves in the Stall.* Indeed they that go forth, to meet the rising Sun by Faith, they will grow up in all the Graces and Fruits of the Spirit of Holiness: However, I say, it is the Rising of the Sun of Righteousness, and Shining in his Glory that makes Sinners gather to him by Faith, *John iii. 11.* He manifested forth his Glory, and then his Disciples believed in him. The Displays of his Glory are his gathering Arms, *Isa. xlv. 11.* He gathers with his Arms, even the Arms of his Grace and Mercy, yea the Displays of his glorious Grace are his military Arms, whereby he subdues them and gathers them into his Camp, *Psal. xlv. 3, 4, 5.* (6.) In a Subordination to all these gathering Means, there is a gathering Fan, *Matth. iii. 12. Luke iii. 17. His Fan is in his Head, and he will thorowly purge his Floor, and gather his Wheat into his Garner.* The Devil hath his Fan, wherewith he seeks to winnow God's People

People as Wheat, in Order to separate them from Christ, and from one another; but Christ hath his Fan, wherewith he will winnow his Church and People, in order to gather them to himself, and to one another in him. By the Fan of his Word, and the Fan of his Rod, he purges the Floor of his Church: It is his threshing Floor, and sometimes he must take the Flail of his Doctrine and thresh upon his People, to separate the Chaff of Error from the Grains of Truth, and the Sound from the Erroneous. Sometimes he must take the Flail of Discipline, and severe Judgments, Rods and Calamities, to purge his Floor, and gather the Wheat from the Chaff. Tho' the great Day of Judgment will be the great Day of separating the Precious from the Vile, and gathering of his Saints, yet there are trying Days in this World, wherein considerable Discoveries are made, and the Lord's scattered and divided Sheep are gathered together to be more unite to one another in the Lord. It is necessary sometimes, that the Lord take his Fan in his Hand, for purging his Floor; when it is foul, it needs to be swept with a Besom: The Floor of his House is sometimes very foul; and as when one sweeps a House, if there be Dross and Dirt in it, and also Gold, and Diamonds, and Jewels lying hid among the Dust, all may be swept to the Door together; but the Jewels being soon mist, are gathered again from among the Filth: So, when the Besom of publick Judgments and Calamities come, the Godly, as well as the wicked, may be all swept to the Door together, and share of the same outward Strokes; but God in due Time will gather his Jewels to his Cabinet, *Mal. iii. 17. They shall be mine in the Day when I make up my Jewels.* So much concerning the various Means of gathering.

The second Question upon this Head, was, to speak of the Qualities of this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*; and here the Qualities of this Gathering may be considered, either *passively*, shewing how his Power is exerted; or *actively*, shewing how their Faith

is exercised : Or, 1st. The Qualities of God's Gathering the People to *Shiloh*. 2^{dly}. The Qualities of the Peoples Gathering to him, under his Conduct, Influence and Assistance. Now of both these particularly.

1. *Passively*, The Qualities of God's Gathering the People to Christ, or how his powerful Grace is exerted, when in a Day of his Power, he makes them willing, and gathers them. 1st, His gathering Power is exerted congruently, and agreeably to the rational Nature, *Hos. xi. 4. He draws with the Bands of Love, and the Cords of a Man.* What is that ? He even brings them over by rational Arguments upon the Judgment, and powerful Persuasion upon the Will : While the Minds of Men are blinded with Ignorance, their Affections are bent upon their Lusts; but now the Understanding being cleared, the Affections are captivated, the Man is bound with invincible Reason; and so he gathers Souls in a Way congruous to the rational Nature. 2^{dly}, His gathering Power is exerted affectionately and lovingly, *Hos. ii. 14. I will allure her, and bring her to the Wilderness, &c.* I'll, as it were, beguile her, and speak to her Heart, as the *Hebrew* signifies : I'll persuade her, that there is more Reason to yield to my Intreaties, than to the Devil's Sophistry. The Lord sweetly draws up the Lock of the Heart, and wins in upon the Affections, *Jer. xxx. 3. I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, and with loving Kindness have I drawn thee :* As a Man puts on his best Robes on his Wedding-Day, so Christ in the Day of Espousals, when he would gather the Eyes of the People to look to him, and their Affections to centre on him, he puts on his Robes of Glory and Grace, clothes himself with a Garment of Salvation, with an alluring Attire, when he courts Sinners. 3^{dly}, His gathering Power is exerted efficaciously; he comes with that Argument of Omnipotence, whereby he commanded Light to shine out of Darkness; by that same Argument whereby he commanded the Dead to arise, does he conquer and captivate the Soul;
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by that same Argument whereby Christ himself was raised, *Eph. i. 19, 20.* till there be no Power to resist, no Strength of Corruption left to oppose. The infinite Bounty of God, the infinite Beauty of Christ, and the infinite Power of the Holy Ghost, all concur to gain the Soul, with infinite ravishing Sweetness: Almighty Love kills the mighty Enmity; and how can he be resisted? *Compel them to come in, &c.* Before Conversion, the Sinner is unwilling, and he cannot come to Christ, because he will not; but in Conversion, the Man is made willing, and so he cannot resist, because he will not; the Will is gained, *Thy People shall be willing.* 4^{thly}, His gathering Power and Grace is exerted seasonably, for he speaks a Word in Season to them, *Isa. l. 4. The Lord hath given me the Tongue of the Learned, to speak a Word in Season to him that is weary.* A Word of Power comes at a particular Season, at God's set Hour; and People are never gathered till that Hour come. *The Hour comes when the Dead shall hear, &c.* O happy Hour, says one, wherein the Word and Ordinances are impregnated with almighty Efficacy! When the Minister finds himself in a better Frame than ordinary, he is ready to think, that blessed Hour is come; but he may be oft mistaken. However, *the Counsel of God stands sure, the Lord knows who are his;* therefore we must preach in Faith, and pray in Faith, and wait in Hope, and water in Hope, till the accepted Time come, the happy Hour; and when it comes, it will be an Hour never to be forgotten, a signal Time, on which Eternity depends: Besides, it is seasonable with Respect to the Soul that is gathered, it comes at the Nick of Time, when it is in the Extremity of Distress, &c. Hence, 5^{thly}, This gathering Grace is manifested surprisingly, it is freighted with preventing Mercy: Herein God anticipates the Current of the carnal Affections; when the Soul is running post to Hell, God stops his Career, as he did that of *Paul, Acts ix.* every Sinner that is converted, is gathered beside his proper natural Inten-

tion: Little does the Man foresee what is God's Design, in bringing him to such a Place, to hear such a Sermon, to live under such a Ministry; even as little as *Saul* thought of finding a Kingdom, when he went out to seek his Father's Asses. Some have come to hear the Word, in a very customary careless Manner, not knowing where else to spend an Hour; when lo, on a sudden, an Arrow of Conviction hath been shot into their Consciences, and awakned them to seek God. His gathering Grace both in the Beginning and Progress thereof, is still exerted in such a Manner, as sweetly surprises the Soul, *Song vi. 12.* *Or ever I was aware, my Soul made me like the Chariots of Amminadib:* When I was expecting, that my Soul should be gathered among the Damned, O Grace stepped in, and gathered me to *Shiloh*. 6thly, This gathering Power is exerted sovereignly, there is much Sovereignty manifested, both over the gathering Means and the gathered Soul: Over the gathering Means, such as the Word and Ordinances; it is not every Word that does the Business: How many great Sermons, and spiritual Discourses have you heard, O Believer, and yet never a Word reached your Heart, till the Lord sent it with Power? Hence the Word that kills one, quickens another; the Word that is unfavoury to one, is sweet to another; the Word that is galling to one, is gaining to another; the Word that hardens one, softens another. Also, over the gathered Soul, many Hundreds are gathered together at a Time, yet perhaps, but one or two are touched, and reached by the Word: The Minister is speaking to the Heart of these, but only to the Ears of all the Rest. O is God finding you out by his Word, and gathering you? He is Sovereign, *Rom. ix. 15.* *Shewing Mercy on whom he will, &c.* 7thly, This gathering Grace is exerted particularly, for he calls his Sheep by Name, *John x. 3.* and leads them out; As by the Law, the Sinner is convinced particularly *Thou art the Man*, the sinful Man, the guilty Man; so by the Gospel, he is called particularly. I

I have called thee by Name, Isa. xlii. 1. and xlv. 4. What is offered indefinitely and generally to all, is carried Home particularly to the Soul : It comes to be as particular, as if God were speaking to none other in all the Congregation. Christ came to save Sinners, and to seek lost Souls, and particularly I am come for you Man, you Woman ; *Rise for the Master calls you*. O, says the Soul, it is me that God is speaking to, there is good News for me ! 8thly, This gathering Power is exerted successfully : The Lord comes to gather, and the People are gathered ; he draws, and they run, and run in to the Ark ; *The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the Righteous run in to it, and are safe* : The Soul runs, not only to it, but in to it, so as to be found in Christ. People may be gathered to Christ, in a Manner, and yet not gathered successfully, unless gathered in to him ; as in the Days of Noah, when the Deluge of Water came upon the World, many might gather to the Ark, and hing about the Sides of it, and climb up on it for Shelter ; but the Waves at last washed them away. None came to it with Success, nor were saved, but such as wan in to the Ark ; so, unless you win in to Christ, be united to him, implanted in him, as a Branch to the Stock, so as to derive Life from him, and grow up in him ; if you be not thus found in him, you cannot be saved by him, tho' in several Respects you may lean upon him, and grip to him : They gather to him with Success, that get in to him. O happy they, that are gathered to him, so as to win him ! Phil. iii. 8. He that wins succeeds, and much Winning, much Success ; and *they may laugh that win* ; for they win all, who win Christ : They win his Person for their Husband, they win his Purchase for their Jointure, his Covenant for their Charter, his Spirit for their Counsellor, his Righteousness for their Robe, his Grace for their Ornament, his Glory for their Crown, and all his Fulness for their Supply ; they may live upon their Winning for ever. 9thly. This gathering Power is exerted irreversibly, yet gradually ; when God gathers Sinners to

Christ, he gathers them irreversibly ; *For the Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance* ; he never leaves drawing of them, and gathering them to him, till he hath gathered them all about his Throne in Glory : His gathering Grace works a lasting Impression, and abiding Effect on them ; the Seed of God remains in them. Many hundred Sermons you have heard, and all these excellent Truths vanish, and slip off from your Memory, as Water falling on a Rock : But O, says the Believer, tho' I forget much, yet I think I'll never forget such a Word, that came to my Soul with a Glance of glorious Majesty in it, and filled all the Powers of my Soul with a divine seraphick Enlargement : *I will never forget thy Precepts, for by them thou hast quickned me.* Christ having begun to gather, goes on with the Soul constantly, till the Business be done and ended ; *For he waits to be gracious*, Isa. xxx. 18. He will not take a Refusal, nor desist for an ill Answer ; and whatever Interruption may be after the laying the Foundation, yet he carries on the good Work : It is not altogether stopt, as it is with others, that may be under some common Operations of the Spirit, the Lord may leave them, and never return ; but here he renews his Visits, and gradually advances his gathering Work : *For his going forth is prepared as the Morning*, Hos. vi. 3. and he comes to them, *as the Rain, as the latter and former Rain upon the Earth*, which makes the Fruits of the Ground gradually to spring up. A sudden Work is seldom a sound Work, says one. However, his ordinary Way of gathering is by various Degrees ; he gives them now a Pull and then a Pull, here a little, and there a little. 10thly, This gathering Power is exerted remarkably : Hence the Soul can say, Once I was blind, now I see. Tho' the Kingdom of Heaven comes not with outward Observations, yet either in the Beginning, or Progress, or both, it is remarkable, discernible, and sensibly felt, by the Soul that is wrought upon and gathered : He hears the Voice of the great Shepherd,

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he sees his Glory, he feels his Power, Sometimes 'tis remarkable, in the very Beginning; like a Man born blind, and come to Age, and getting his Eyes suddenly opened, he cannot but know the Time: In others it is not so remarkable, till the Progress thereof make it so; like Rain dropping from a House-Top on a Flint-Stone, that by constant Dropping makes a Hollow in the Stone; when it began to make the Hollow at first, is hard to tell, but that it is made, is remarkably evident: Even so here, by the constant Dropping of the Rain of the Spirit's Influences, from Time to Time, there is an Hollow made in the Heart; the Man is gradually emptied of Sin, and Self-righteousness; and Nothing can fill that Hollow, but a God in Christ: When it began at first, he cannot tell; but now it is remarkable, if Grace be in any Measure exercised: Thus you see the Qualities of God's Gathering People, yet after all, we are not capable to give an exact Account of the outgoings of this mighty gathering Grace; many feel it, who cannot tell the particular Manner thereof; *for the Wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the Sound thereof, but know not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth.*

Preached at *Airth*, June 19th, 20th, and 21st, 1725.

2dly *Actively* viewed, the Qualities of this Gathering, that is, of the Peoples Gathering to *Shiloh*; or the Way how Faith is exercised, or how the Soul acts, when it is prevailed upon to come to the Lord Jesus, and so to be gathered unto *Shiloh*. In general, it is by Faith that they gather to him; and hence this Gathering to *Shiloh* is so frequently called a *Coming* to him, and *believing* on him, *trusting* and *staying* our selves upon him. In this Gathering unto *Shiloh*, the Soul acts believably; and all the other Qualities of this Gathering are reducible to this, and are so many
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Ways, wherein Faith acts, in coming and gathering to Christ ; or how, being acted they act : And here is Matter for Trial ; particularly then,

(1.) In this active Gathering unto *Shiloh*, People are made to act *spiritually*, for it is a spiritual Gathering, under the Conduct of the Spirit of God, as a Spirit of Faith, making the Soul to gather under the Wings of Christ the *Messias*. It is not by natural Might, but by the Power of the Divine Spirit, that Sinners gather to a Saviour : Not by might, nor by Power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord ; even *the exceeding Greatness of his Almighty Power*, Eph. i. 19. There is a spiritual internal Principle, from which the Man acts, in his Gathering to *Shiloh*, even the Spirit of God as the main, and the new Heart as the subordinate Principle of Faith in the Man. It is not the Spirit's working extrinsically upon the Man ; Hypocrites may have the Spirit working on them extrinsically, to the Production of great Affections and Inlargement, while they are not savingly gathered : But this spiritual Act is from a spiritual Principle, whereof the Spirit of God within is the Spring. The former is but a natural Acting by some external Objects, it is like a Pool fed by Water from the Clouds ; the other is like a Well fed by a Spring within.

Quest. How shall I know the Difference betwixt these two, *viz.* the Spirit's Working on me by his common Motions, and his Working in me as a living Principle ? Why, the common Motions of the Spirit, externally moving the Affections, differ from the saving Operations of the Spirit internally elevating the Soul to a God in Christ, as a Land-flood differs from a living Spring ; The Land-flood is maintained externally by the Clouds, the living Fountain is maintained internally by its own Spring : Thus the Hypocrite's Frames and Affections are maintained only by external Means & Objects, such as the tuneable Voice of the Minister ; so *Ezekiel* was to his Hearers as a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant Voice, and can play well on an Instrument, *Ezek. xxxiii. 32.*
and

and when the external Object or Excitement is over, then their Frame and Affection falls, because the only Thing that maintained it is gone: Whereas, in the spiritual Acting of the Soul that is gathering to *Shiloh*, tho' Faith comes by Hearing externally, yet the spirit of God being received by the Hearing of Faith, this internal Principle of spiritual Life does many Times animate the Soul to spiritual Work, when all external Objects and Operations fail; and this may be known, just as a Spring-well is known by the Bubbling up of the Water. Thus is the Spirit's Inhabitation known by the Actings of the Graces of the Spirit, such as Faith, Love, Repentance, Joy in the Lord, and the like.

(2.) In gathering to *Shiloh*, People are made to act *Knowingly* and *Judiciously*, under the Influences of the Spirit, as a Spirit of Light; and to act as in a Matter of the greatest Concern, with Judgment and Understanding, saying, as *John vi. 68. To whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life. We believe and are sure that thou art Christ the Son of the living God.* Many gather together in a confused Way, and know not wherefore they meet together; but this gathering includes Knowledge and saving spiritual Illumination: *They that know thy Name, will put their Trust in thee, Psal. ix. 10.* They that know him, will gather to him; there must be a Seeing of the Son, before there can be a Believing in him, or Gathering to him. Many, instead of gathering to Christ, they gather to an Idol of their own Fancy; when they hear of Christ, their idolatrous carnal Mind represents a carnal Image of Christ in their own Brain: As those, *Hos. xiii. 2.* that are said to have made Idols according to their own Understanding, so many in their own Imagination form an Idea of Christ; and this Idea or Image of Christ, that they have in their own Mind, is all that they have for Christ. But, O Sirs, when Christ is externally revealed in the Gospel, there must be a marvellous Light discovering him in himself, making him known, tho' not perfectly, yet really and truly as he is; not noly as he is Man, but as God-Man,

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having all the Fulness of the Godhead in him, and all the Glory of God appearing in his Face, 2 Cor. iv. 6. So as the Soul cannot but cleave and adhere to him. A painted Sun will neither give Light nor Heat, but the real Sun gives both : So a painted Image and Representation of Christ in the Imagination gives no spiritual Light, Heat, nor communicates any transforming Vertue ; but the true Sun of Righteousness ariseth with Healing under his Wings. It is true, this Light is not without Mists and Smoke, sent forth from the bottomless Pit, to darken all ; but yet there is such a clear Discovery of the Man's Inability, of God's gracious offer, and Christ's Good-will and Mind to the Bargain, as determines the Soul to its Duty.

(3.) In gathering to *Shiloh*, People are made to act *Fiducially*. This is connected with the former, *Psal. ix. 10. They that know thy Name, will put their Trust in thee.* This I call an Acting fiducially, that is, with a believing Perswasion and particular Application : The good News, that *Shiloh* is come, that Jesus Christ is come to save Sinners, even the Chief of Sinners, is received as a faithful saying, and so with believing Perswasion, and as worthy of all Acceptation, and so with particular Application. Perswasion with Application must be in the Nature of Faith, according to the Measure and Degree of Faith. If it be weak Faith, it is a weak Perswasion ; if strong Faith, a strong Perswasion : And it is not a natural Perswasion, a Man perswading himself that all shall be well with him, and so no more of it ; nay, it is supernatural and comes of God, which natural carnal Perswasion does not, *Gal. v. 8.* This Perswasion comes not of him that calleth you, intimating that right Perswasion comes of God ; like that of *Abraham, Rom. iv. 20, 21. He staggered not at the Promise of God through Unbelief, but was strong in the Faith, giving Glory to God, being fully perswaded, that he that had promised was able to perform.* And like that of the Old Testament Believers, *Heb. xi. 13. who received not the Promises by Feeling, but by Faith.* But how ? Why, they were perswaded

swaded of them, and embraced them. But here there is a twofold Perswasion that ought to be carefully distinguished, and the Confounding whereof occasions many Mistakes and Misrepresentations ; namely, a *Fiducial* Perswasion, and an *Evidential* Perswasion.

The Former is the Assurance of Faith, and in the Nature of it ; the Other is the Assurance of Sense, and consequential to Faith, and is not properly Faith at all, but Sense. Now this fiducial Perswasion differs from evidential, in four Respects. 1. They differ in their *Acts*. By fiducial Perswasion, the Man receives and rests upon Christ, and trusts in him for Salvation to himself, believing and expecting this Salvation according to the Promise of the Gospel, and as Christ is offered and exhibite to him therein : But by evidential Perswasion, the Man knows and feels that he hath received Christ. The Former every Believer hath when he acts Faith ; the Latter many Believers want even when they act Faith, because, tho' they may be conscious that they are acting upon Christ for Salvation, yet they may not be conscious of the Quality of the Act, if it is saving or not. 2. They differ in their *Order*. We first believe by a fiducial Perswasion, before we can be sure by an evidential Perswasion ; the one is the Cause, and the other the Effect ; the Perswasion that is in Faith, is like the Heat in the Fire ; the Perswasion that is after Faith, is like Heat in the Room, that is the Effect of the former : And, because Assurance (that is commonly so called, namely, the *Assurance of Sense*) is the Effect of Faith ; This will not prove, that there is no Assurance in Faith, no more than Heat in the Room will prove, that there is no Heat in the Fire ; for the contrary is rather evident. 3. They differ in their *Objects* and *Grounds* : The Object and Ground of fiducial Perswasion, or of the Assurance of Faith, is without the Man, and looks to the Word and Promise of God, the Blood and Righteousness of Christ, the Truth and Faithfulness of God : But, the Object and Foundation of evidential Perswasion, or of the Assurance

rance of Sense, is within the Man, and looks to the
 Work of God within ; such as Graces, Attainments
 and Experiences. As there is a great Difference be-
 twixt a Man's being perswaded, that he hath such a
 Sum of Money, because he hath it upon Bond, or
 good Security ; and his being perswaded thereof, be-
 cause he hath it in his Hand, in his Chest or Coffers ;
 so here, by the Perswasion of Faith, the Man is per-
 swaded of Salvation thro' Christ, because he hath it
 upon Bond, namely, God's Promise sealed with
 Christ's Blood, which is good Security : But the
 Ground of the Perswasion of Sense, is the Man's hav-
 ing it in his Hand, or so much of it, which is not
 Faith, but Sense. 4. They differ in their *Effects* ; the
 Effect of Faith, or fiducial Perswasion, is Justification ;
 the Effect of Sense, or evidential Perswasion, is Con-
 solation : A Man is not justified by his evidential Per-
 swasion, or by knowing and feeling that Christ is his ;
 but he is justified by his fiducial Perswasion, by his
 fiducial Knowledge, whereby he receives and rests
 upon Christ as his, and trusts in him for Salvation to
 himself : By this fiducial Knowledge, I say, is justifi-
 cation, *Isa. liii. 11. By his Knowledge shall my righteous
 Servant justifie many.* Now, if these two were careful-
 ly distinguished, and that People considered, that it
 is the former, namely fiducial Perswasion, that we
 put into the Nature of Faith, as essential to it, not
 the latter, namely evidential Perswasion, which is
 consequential to it ; it would prevent many Mistakes,
 and Misrepresentations on this Head ; as if some pla-
 ced Assurance so in the Nature of Faith, as that none
 were to be reckoned Believers, but such as have this
 full evidential Perswasion, and Assurance of Sense,
 which is a gross Misapprehension of Matters, and flows
 from the confounding of this twofold Perswasion,
 which differ as much as Faith and Sense : Assurance
 of Faith carries in it the Perswasion of the Faithful-
 ness of God in the Promise ; the Assurance of Sense
 carries in it a Perswasion of the Reality of Grace in
 the Heart : By the one we see with our Eyes, as it
 were

wefe ; by the other we handle with our Hands the Word of Life : The one, to wit, Faith is begun Vision, the other, to wit, Sense is begun Fruition : Assurance of Faith is essential to Faith, the Assurance of Sense is consequential to it, and not always in, or with it. And hence we say, with Respect to this evidential Assurance and Perswasion, as our *Confession* hath it, *That it does not so belong to the Essence of Faith, but that a true Believer may wait long, and conflict with many Difficulties before he be Partaker of it ;* namely, of that Assurance, that is grounded upon the inward Evidence of Grace, and Testimony of the Spirit, which is the Assurance of Sense there spoken of : But the Assurance of Faith, which is founded upon the divine Truth of the Promise of Salvation, and upon the Word of God without us, as the Object thereof, this must be as essential to Faith, as Seeing is essential to the Eye : And yet this will not say, that the Believer hath always even this fiducial Perswasion, unless his Faith be in Exercise : For, as it is in the Nature of the Eye to see, tho' the Man that hath Eyes, is sometimes sleeping, or winking, or dim-sighted ; so it is in the Nature of Faith, to be perswaded of the Favour and Good-will of God in Christ, as revealed in the Word of Grace, tho' he, that hath this Faith, is sometimes doubting, sometimes Faith is not exercised, sometimes the Eye of Faith is dimmed with the Dust of Corruption and Unbelief. It is with Faith, as with other Graces : As some have a true Love to Christ, yet dare not say they love, because they have so much Enmity remaining : They have true Grace, but dare not say they have it, because they have so much Sin and Corruption ; but their doubting of their Love and Grace does not infer, that they have no Love, no Grace ; so some have this fiducial Perswasion, and Assurance of Faith, who yet dare not say they have it, because they have so much Unbelief and so many Doubts : But as Love is opposite to Enmity, and Grace opposite to Corruption, tho' they are in the same Subject ; so is Faith opposite to

Doubt-

Doubting, in its very Nature, even tho' Faith and Doubting may be in the same Believer, as Light and Darkneſs in the ſame Air ; yet their Natures are oppoſite to one another. As this fiducial Act of *Gathering to Shiloh* imports a believing Perſwaſion, ſo alſo a particular Application. In the offer of the Goſpel, Salvation is particularly held forth to every one, ſaying, *The Promise is to you ; to you is the Word of this Salvation ſent ;* therefore in *Gathering to Chriſt*, People are to lay hold on Salvation to themſelves, particularly : *Chriſt came to ſave Sinners, of whom ſays Faith, I am the chief ;* Mercy is held out to me, and I lay Hold on it as held out to me : As when the Law comes with Power, it ſays not only in the general, *All have ſinned ;* but it comes in particular, ſaying, *You have ſinned ;* and makes you ſay, *I am the Man, the ſinful Man, the guilty Man, the condemned Man !* So when the Goſpel comes with Power, it ſpeaks to the Perſon particularly, ſaying, *Not only, Chriſt came to ſave ſinners ;* but, *Here is a Saviour for you :* And the Soul is made to ſay, *I am concerned in this,* The Goſpel offers Life and Salvation to the poor Soul particularly, and he is commanded to believe for Salvation particularly, and the Man believes with particular Application. Thus a certain Divine illustrates it : As the ſad Sentence of the Law, generally and indefinitely held forth in the Scripture, is particularly applied for his Conviction and Condemnation ; ſo the precious Promise of the Goſpel, generally and indefinitely held forth to all Sinners, that hear the Goſpel, is particularly applied for Salvation ; and without this particular Application, there is no effectual *Gathering to Shiloh* : When Goſpel-light ſhines into the Heart of the awakened Sinner, it applies the Promise particularly to it ſelf, as it did formerly apply the Threatnings of the Law particularly ; and as from the Law it did particularly condemn it ſelf ; ſo now from the Goſpel, it does by Faith particularly abſolve it ſelf, or rather find it ſelf abſolved from the

Law.

Law-Sentence, in its being helped of make particular Application to the Gospel-Promises.

Again, (4.) In gathering of *Shiloh*, the People that are brought to him are made to act *evangelically*, or to believe, in a Gospel-Manner, to receive and rest upon him, as he is offered to us in the Gospel. There is a Gospel-Ground on which the People do gather: Legal Faith acts, upon a legal Ground, such as inherent Strength, and natural Righteousness; but true Faith acts upon the Ground of a borrowed Strength, and an imputed Righteousness of another, saying, *Surely in the Lord only have I Righteousness and Strength*, Isa. xlv. 24. This Gathering to *Shiloh* is a Self-renouncing Business, stripping the Man of his own Righteousness, of his own Strength, taking him intirely off his own Bottom; they that are gathered to Christ, are gathered out of themselves. There is a Gospel-Rule also, whereby they gather, in a Suitableness to the Gospel-Offer and Dispensation, 1 Cor. xv. 11. *So we preach, and so ye believed*. Faith answers the Gospel-Call, as the Impress upon the Wax does answer the Engravings of the Seal, so Christ offers himself, and so Sinners gather to him, and believe in him for Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. Hence again, there is a Gospel-Order, wherein the Gathering of the People is to him; the Soul, in coming to him, receives first the Person, and then the Portion; even as God gives Christ, and then with him all things, Rom. viii. 32. The People gather to him, in a Day of Power, *First*, as a Jesus, *and then*, as a Lord; *First*, for Justification, *and then*, for Sanctification. Legal Adventures invert this Gospel-Order, seeking Sanctification first, that upon that Bottom it may build its Justification; seeking Righteousness, *as it were by the Works of the Law*, Rom. ix. 31. And however confused and indistinct the true Believer's Faith may be, in his first Believing, yet repeated Acts of Faith may afterwards make it more and more evident to him, that right Believing is in the foresaid Gospel-Order. There is a Gospel-Warrant, upon which
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this Gathering proceeds : They that gather to *Shiloh* act warantably, upon the Warrant of an objective Sufficiency ; there is a sufficient Christ presented : O the Sufficiency of his Person, being God-Man in one Person ; the Sufficiency of his Offices and Commission, being sealed of God to be a Surety, a Saviour, a Prophet, Priest and King ; the Sufficiency of his Righteousness, his Doing and Dying, his Obedience and Satisfaction ; the Sufficiency of his Power, as being able to save to the uttermost ; the Sufficiency of his Will, while he proclaims his Good-will towards Men ; and that God is in Christ, reconciling the World to himself ! They gather upon the Warrant of a general Gospel-Dispensation of Grace through Christ, in the external Revelation of the Word, where the Elect are not characterized more than others but Life and Salvation through Christ held out to Sinners of Mankind, without Distinction of Nation, State or Condition ; and so in an indefinite Way. Thus run all the Promises, except these that are made to Believers, or such as have Grace already ; to them indeed the Promises are definite, so also they are definite to the Elect, in the Decree of Heaven ; but in the external Dispensation of the Gospel, they are indefinite and general, saying, To you belongs the Covenants and the Promise ; *Rom. ix. 4.* and as the Promise is indefinite, so the Call is universal, whether by Exhortations, Invitations, Intreaties, Counsels, or Commands to all and every one, to come and receive Christ, and all his sure Mercies, freely, *Isa. lv. 1.* and upon these Gospel-Warrants do the People gather to *Shiloh*. In a Word the whole Covenant, and all the Promises of it, are held forth to all the People that they may gather to it ; *I'll give thee for a Covenant of the People, Isa. xlii. 6.* Hence we are laid, to receive the Promise through Faith, *Gal. iii. 14.* to be persuaded of them, and embrace them, *Heb. xi. 13.* and the Faith we are called to, is said to be a Receiving of the Word, *Acts ii. 41.* a Taking hold of his Covenant, *Isa. lvi. 4.* a Believing of the Testimony,

2 Theff.

2 Theff. i. 10. Christ cannot be received, but as he is offered ; he is not offered to us, but in a Word a Promise, a Testimony : Hence the substantial Act of Faith being an Assent, there must be a Word, Promise, or Testimony, for Faith's immediate Object, wherein we see and receive Christ : If a Man would see his Shadow in a Glass, he first looks to the Glass, and through it sees his own Shadow or Image ; the Glass is the immediate Object, to which his Sight is directed ; so, in order to our seeing of Christ, the Glass of the Gospel-promise is set before us. Thus a displayed Covenant of Grace, as standing fast in Christ, seems to be the Warrant for the Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, mentioned, *Jer. 1. 5. Come and let us join our selves to the Lord, in a perpetual Covenant* (says our Reading) *that shall not be forgotten* : I know this is viewed, by some, in another Sense, with Reference to our covenanting ; but I think the original Reading that others notice is very pleasant and evangelical, for it may be read, *Come and let us join our selves to the Lord, the perpetual Covenant shall not be forgotten*, q. d. Come and let us gather together unto *Shiloh* ; why, the everlasting Covenant, that stands fast in him, who is the All of the Covenant, shall never be forgotten : And so it may be viewed, as an Encouragement of Faith, and Reason for the Gathering of the People to him ; behold he is given for a Covenant of the People, and this perpetual Covenant shall not be forgotten : Thus they are made to act evangelically.

(5.) In gathering to *Shiloh*, the People that are brought to him are made to act cordially and spontaneously, with Heart and Will ; yea, with a Thousand Good-Wills ; *O take my Heart*, says the Man, in the Day of Power, *take it, and a Thousand Blessings with it*. It is true, there is no Gathering, no Approaching to him, without a Draught of Omnipotency ; yet there is no Violence in it, no Force or Compulsion, but when Power comes, it takes away the Backwardness and Unwillingness, *Psal. cx. 3. Thy People shall be*
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willing. Never did a Mariner draw near to a Shore with better Will, after a Shipwreck, than the Soul comes to Christ, in the Day of Power; the Person being drawn, yields necessarily and willingly both: Draw me, we will run after Thee; *Draw me*, there is the Almighty Power exerted, in its irresistible Operation; *We will run*, there is the voluntary Motion of the Soul: So that this Gathering does not destroy, but establish the Liberty of the Will of the rational Agent. Reason is not hoodwinked, the Person approaches to a God in Christ, upon the most rational Grounds, seeing and apprehending his Misery while far from God, and the Happiness of Nearness to him in Christ. And this Gathering is as cordial as it is voluntary; as the Will is inclined, so the Heart is inflamed. Hypocrites may gather to Ordinances, and gather to a Communion-Table with the outward Man; they may draw near to God with the Mouth, and honour him with the Lip, while the Heart is far removed from him: This is what God complains of, *Their Heart is far from me*: But what do I regard a Gathering of dead Corpses about my Table and Ordinances, a Gathering of Bodies, while there is no Gathering of Hearts? But in this gracious Gathering, the Language of the Soul is, O many a Time I have given my Heart away to the Devil; I gave my Heart and Affections away to Lusts; I gave my Heart away to the World; and now, shall I give Christ less than I gave them? It will be a Miracle if he accept of it, after my manifold Departures; but O if I had as many Souls as I had Sins, I would give them to him! O if I could believe in him with the whole Heart, pray to him with the whole Heart, serve him with the whole Heart; and that all my Affections, that have been struggling among the Creatures, may be gathered to him, and centred in him! Yea in the Day of Power, a Man finds himself so willingly and freely to come to Christ, that he is rolled upon him, as if he were carried on a Wave of the Sea, or rather in a Chariot paved with Love: Formerly he found Believing

Heaving hard, yea, that it was impossible for him to come to Christ; but now he finds it impossible for him to stay away from Christ. Believing is so sweet and easy then, that, as if he had Wings, he flees for Refuge to the Hope set before him, *Heb. vi. 18.* Tho' as a great Divine (*viz. Dr. Owen*) expresses it. Faith is in the Understanding, in Respect of its Being and Subsistence; yet it is in the Will and Heart, in Respect of its effectual Working: As to its Essence, it lies in Assent, but the saving Quality of this Assent is, that it is cordial; and it is not true Faith, if it be not a cordial Assent to God's Testimony concerning Christ. And indeed there is a great Difference betwixt a dead Assent, and a cordial hearty Assent to any Truth: Suppose (says one) you were in a foreign Land, and that you got a sure Account, that the *Turks* have got a Victory over the *Persians*; and at the same Time you hear, that your beloved Spouse is recovered of a dangerous Disease, that all your Family is well, and your Affairs prosper: There is a great Difference betwixt the Way of assenting to these Two; you believe the former, but it hath no Impression on your Heart, it is only a naked, heartless, unconcerned Assent; but you would believe the other cordially and gladly, because you are much concerned therein: Hence you would welcome the Messenger. Thus the Gospel is not only a faithful Saying, but worthy of all Acceptation; and in gathering to Christ, in the Day of Power, the Soul acts cordially.

(6.) In this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, they are made to act *humbly and reverentially*: The Man comes with a *What am I, and what is my Father's House?* Behold I am vile, and if the Lord shall have Mercy on me, it is well; Grace shall have the Glory; but if not, I may even preach this Righteousness in Hell, and declare he never wronged me, he is a just God. O the Soul acts *humbly* in the Day of powerful Gathering, *Ezek. xvi. 63.* *That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth, because of thy Shame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that*

thou hast done. O but a Soul convinced of its own Unworthiness, and Desert of Hell, and that scarce can expect any Thing but utter Damnation; how does the first Drawing of Mercy melt and humble it! O whence is this to such a Worm as I! He stands behind Christ weeping, and washing his Feet with Tears. When one of the first Works of the Spirit in Conversion, is, to give the Soul a Light in its Hand, to go down to the dark Cellars of his Heart, and make Discoveries, so as he stands amazed, trembling at the Sight of himself; and the next Work of the Spirit, is, to lead him to the lightsome Chamber of the King of Glory, to bring him from Darkness to Light; O how is he melted with a Sense of Mercy, and humbled with a Sense of his own monstrous Vileness! *Now mine Eyes see thee, wherefore I abhor my self.* O in such a Day, the Man sees his Heart vile, his Lips vile, his Practice vile, his Righteousness vile and filthy Rags; he sees in his Bosom, as it were, an Hell of Devils and unclean Spirits; that when he thinks on himself, it makes him lothe and scunner, as it were, like a Man ready to bock or vomit, when he sees some filthy nasty Thing, especially among his Meat; or as a Man's Flesh will creep, when he sees some filthy venomous Toad or Viper: So it is with these, that see themselves in the Lord's Light, in the Day of their Gathering to *Shiloh*. They that were never humbled, were never gathered; and they that have been deeply humbled, have come to God with Ropes about their Necks, as worthy to be cast over the Gibbet, and hanged over the Fire of God's everlasting Vengeance; they have been humbled to the Dust, yea humbled to Nothing before the Lord, and to a thousand times less and worse than Nothing; yea they cannot see such vile Monsters among all the Devils in Hell as themselves; they come therefore with Humility, Reverence and godly Fear.

(7.) In this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, under the Influence of gathering Power and Grace, they are made to act *boldly*, tho' *humbly*, *Heb. iv. last,*
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Let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace. Heb. x. 19. We have Boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus. Eph. iii. 12. In whom we have Boldness, and Access with Confidence, by the Faith of him. Here is the Boldness of Faith, in Opposition to the Boldness of Presumption. Bold Faith comes walking on a Sea of Blood, or rather, upon the red and white Pavement of the active and passive Obedience of Christ. This Boldness of Faith's Approach to a God in Christ is remarkable for several Things: It is remarkable for the *Vehemency*, that is sometimes in it; O how vehemently does the soul act, when it is laying Siege to Heaven, by the Prayer of Faith, and importunate Supplication, crying, *Lord, I believe, help my Unbelief; Lord, increase my Faith; Lord, give a Drink of the Water of the Well of Bethlehem. O for a Drop of the precious Blood of the Lamb. O Man, Woman, where are the Bed-sides, and secret Corners that can bear Witness to your Besieging Heaven with your vehement Cries? It is remarkable for the Violence that is in it; The Kingdom of Heaven suffers Violence, and the Violent take it by Force. The Man acts, as it were, violently; If I perish, I perish; at Christ I must be. It acts in a Manner wilfully; Tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him; I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. The Soul, as it were, violently casts it self upon the free Grace and Faithfulness of God, in the greatest Distress; and here it lies, as it were, at Anchor in such stormy Days, Heb. vi. Close. It is remarkable for the Confidence that is in it: It hath the Confidence to give God a Testimonial, as it were; when Faith is acted, not only does God give the Man a Testimonial, Heb. xi. 5, 6. *Enech had this Testimony, that he pleased God; but without Faith it is impossible to please him; but what is yet more strange, Faith not only gets a Testimonial from God, but gives a Testimonial to him, John iii. 33. He that hath received his Testimony, hath set to his Seal that God is true.* Here is the Confidence and Assurance of Faith; it acts upon an infallible Testimony, the*

Divine Veracity and Faithfulness; a *Thus saith the Lord*, is the firm Foundation, upon which Faith is built. It is receiving the Record of God; and all Acts of Faith without this, are but as so many Arrows shot at random in the open Air. Many a confident Address does Faith make, it ventures to go as far ben, as *the Holy of Holies, by the blood of Jesus*; It ventures the Soul upon the Blood of the Son of God, and upon the Promise of a God in Christ: Here is the Boldness of Faith. To gather in to *Shiloh*, and believe in him, is in Effect to say, I adventure my Soul upon Nothing in the World, but upon the Promise of a God, that I have provoked, and been an Enemy to all my Days; I have nothing, but the Word of this God; and yet I must adventure upon it, even my everlasting ALL. It is an adventuring Act, like *Peter* upon the boisterous Water, with this in his Mouth and Heart, *Master save me*. To venture upon the Promise of a provoked God, and to believe him to be a God in Christ reconciled according to his Word, upon Account of the Ransom he hath found out, and the Propitiation he hath set furth; here is the Boldness of Faith. And again, it is remarkable for its *Resoluteness*; the Person, like the Woman with the bloody Issue, presses resolutely through Crouds of Devils and Lusts, and, with an irresistible Inteneness of Soul, forces a Passage thro' all Obstructions, to get a Touch of the Sceptre of King Jesus: We are called to *come with full Assurance of Faith*, with an holy Resolution and Courage. When a poor trembling *Roman* approached the Emperor *Augustus*, he was in some Fear; *What*, says the Emperor, *take you me for an Elephant that will tear you?* So we should come with Boldness to Christ. He encourages the worst of Sinners; he hath given his Word for it, which is firm as the Pillars of Heaven and Earth, and stable like Mountains of Brass, that *him that cometh he will in nowise cast out*: When he comes at first, he will not cast him out: When he comes again afterwards, he will

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not cast him out; he will not cast out the vilest and most desperate Sinner that comes; he will not cast him out of his Favour now, he will not cast him out of Heaven at last: No, no, *He will in no-wise cast him out.* We may gather to *Shiloh*, and come with the greatest Boldness; and welcome, welcome, welcome shall we be for ever. In a Word, this Boldness is remarkable for the *Solemnity* that is in it, it is a solemn Gathering: The People, that gather to *Shiloh*, come to him with a *Behold*, Jer. iii. 22. *Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God.* The Heart goes out with some kind of Eminency and Solemnity: *Behold we come*; let Heaven and Earth be Witnesses; we take Instruments, as it were, in every Angel's Hand, in every Creature's Hand, in every Spire of Grass's Hand, that we are come back to a God in Christ: We are satisfied the whole Universe attest, and behold what we are going to do: Not that the Believer loves to blaze abroad his Religion indecently; no, it is especially a silent, secret, Heart-gathering, and Soul-approach to *Shiloh*; but they are so far from being ashamed of the Match, and so well pleased are they with it, that they are content it be registrate in Heaven, and that the whole Creation attest it; *Behold we come!* The Man acts with a solemn Boldness.

(8.) In this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, they that are under the Conduct of gathering Grace and Power, are made to act *regularly*; no wonder, for in Gathering to *Shiloh*, *their Footsteps are ordered by the Lord*, and according to his Word, the unerring Rule of Faith and Manners: It is in many Respects a regular Address and Approach; and here I shall name some other Particulars, which I suppose may be included in the Regularity of this Approach, 1st. When there is a Gathering to *Shiloh*, the regular Approach and Address to him is made *penitentially*; and Faith in its Address to him acts penitentially, mournfully and tenderly, Jer. l. 4, 5. *Going and weeping they shall go and seek the Lord their God: It shall*

ask the Way to Zion, with their Faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us join our selves to the Lord: Going and Weeping, this Manner of Gathering is not inconsistent with the cordial and cheerful Acting, that I spoke of already; For the Tears of Gospel-repentance are Tears of Joy, and Faith's Apprehension of the Mercy of God in Christ, influences both the Sorrow and the Joy: It is said of New Testament Believers, Isa. xxxv. 10. The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with Songs, and everlasting Joy upon their Heads; they shall obtain Joy and Gladness, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away. Tho' this will not take Place in its Perfection but in Heaven, yet it hath its begun Accomplishment in all Believers that are gathered into Shiloh; they obtain Joy and Gladness, and legal Sorrow and Sighing do flee away; for, according to the Measure of their Faith in Christ, they have Joy and Peace in believing: Yea, in him believing, they rejoice, with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. But Gospel Sorrow and Godly Sorrow does not mar the Musick in this joyful Song; for while they look on him, whom they have pierced, and mourn, Zech. xii. 10. and see him wounded for their Sins, Isa. lv. 5. they see, at the same Time, the Blood issuing out at these Wounds, to be Justice-satisfying Blood, Wrath-appeasing Blood, Hell quenching Blood, and Heaven purchasing Blood; hence a sweet Mixture of Joy and Sorrow both. These seem to be joined together, Jer. xxxi. 9. They shall come with Weeping, and with Supplications will I lead them. It may be rendered, as you may see, in the Margine of some of your Bibles, with Favours will I lead them. As the Sense of their own Sins and Ingratitude makes them come with Weeping; so, at the same Time, the Sense of God's Favours, and Kindness in Christ, makes them come with Rejoicing; for with loving Kindness does he draw them, and with favours does he lead them: O when he favours such a guilty Sinner with a Pardon, such a filthy Sinner with a Laver of Blood, such a naked

naked Sinner with a Robe of Righteousness, such a black Sinner with a beautiful Ornament, such a Hell-deserving Sinner with a Promise of Glory, such a backsliding Beast with a merciful Visit or Return, and such a prodigal Wretch with a compassionate Embrace; and thus with Favours does lead them. O then it is hard to tell, whether the Voice of Joy, or the Voice of Weeping in the Soul be loudest. But as we render it also, it is most expressive of this penitential Address, in gathering to *Shiloh*; with weeping, and with Supplication does he lead them. Indeed Faith's Approach is begun, maintained and nourished, by Prayer and Supplication, saying, *Lord I believe, help my Unbelief; Lord, increase our Faith*. There are some have a presumptuous Faith, that can believe when they will, without praying down the Spirit of Faith from God; as they can eat and drink, and sleep and walk, and talk, tho' they pray not for Strength to do these Things, so they can exercise their natural presumptuous Faith, saying, I trust in God's Mercy, and their false Repentance, saying, God forgive me, I am a great Sinner; they can believe and repent, without Prayer and Supplication for Grace and Strength to do so: But true Grace, true Faith and Repentance, is attained and maintained, in a Way of Supplication; And hence true Faith does increase and decrease, according to the Increase and Decrease of the Spirit of Prayer and Supplication. If it be not so with you, Man, know it, that tho' your false Faith may give you some false Peace for a while, yet when Death and Eternity stare you in the Face, then the Rottenness of your Faith will be discovered, the Hope of the Hypocrite will perish. They that are gathered to *Shiloh*, they come with Weeping, and with Supplication does he lead them. I am not here to enter upon the Dispute, anent the Priority of Faith to Repentance, in their natural Order, and in their Acting and Exercise; it is well if you know both, whether you know the Order or not; only, if whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin, you may guess what Sort of Repentance

it is that is not of Faith : And when the Word of God speaks any where of the proper Order, let your Experience, consonant to the Word, witness and you'll find, that such as the Faith is, such will the Repentance be. Legal Faith works legal Repentance ; Gospel Faith, Gospel Repentance ; true Faith, true Repentance. Thus, when the People of *Nimiveh* believed God, then they proclaimed a Fast, and put on Sackcloth, *John* iii. 5. when they believed his Threatning, and yet that he was not irreconcilable, nor implacable, then they repented. Thus, when a Man believes, and apprehends that God is pacified towards him, then he is confounded and ashamed, *Ezek.* xvi. *last*. When you have harsh Thoughts of God, and no Hope of Favour at his Hand, I true then you'll find your Heart hard like a Stone, and inflexible ; but when you get kindly Thoughts of God, and Apprehension of his Mercy and Good-will, and Love to you in Christ, then I suppose you will find joyful Meltings, and Gospel-sorrow : O the Fire of God's Love melts the Soul ! And the Hardness and Impenitency is healed, when the Sun of Righteousness arises with Healing under his Wings, *Mal.* iv. 2. The Qualities of this penitential Approach you may see, *2 Cor.* vii. 11. And this penitential Acting of Faith runs through the whole of the Believer's Life, in an universal Tenderness of Disposition and Deportment, according to the Measure of Faith : And there are Six tender Things in it which the Believer hath. (1.) He hath a tender Heart, called a broken and contrite Heart, broken for Sin, and from Sin ; *Josiah* his Heart was tender. (2.) A tender Conscience ; some have a Conscience seared as with a hot Iron, and that is a silent Conscience but the Penitent hath a smitten Conscience, as *David's* Heart smote him, when he cut off the Lap of *Saul's* Garment. (3.) A tender Eye ; *They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn* : Rivers of Tears run down their Eyes, because of their own Sins, and the Sins of others, who break God's Law. (4.) A tender Ear, which being circumcised, does hear and fear ; *To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite*

contrite Heart, and trembles at my Word. (5.) A tender Lip or Tongue, that dare not lie, nor speak prophanelly : *I said I will take heed to my Ways, that I Sin not with my Tongue.* And, (6.) A tender Hand, that dares not touch the Garment spotted with the Flesh, but studies to shun all Appearances of Evil ; or, if you will, you may add, *lastly*, That he hath a tender Foot, saying with *Hezekiah*, *I will go softly all my Years in the Bitterness of my Soul.* And this leads to another Quality of this regular Approach. *2dly*, When there is a gathering to *Shiloh*, the regular Approach and Address to him is made *obedientially*, as well as *penitentially* ; it is an obediential Gathering : And as Faith acts *penitentially* ; so it acts *obedientially* ; for it works by Love, *Gal. v. 6.* it purifies the Heart, *Acts xv. 9.* and the Man that hath it purifies himself, even as God is pure, *1 John iii. 3.* It stirs up to new Obedience ; for Faith without Works is dead, *James ii. 20, 26.* Wherever it is, it is still working, and it can no more be idle than the Fire can be. It is true, we are justified by Faith without Works, as the Apostle says, without the Casualty of Works, without the Conditionality of Works, without the Instrumentality of Works, and without the Influence of Works upon our Justification ; but not without the Presence of Works ; for justifying Faith is a sanctifying Thing, and natively works, as the Fire natively burns : Common Faith is a dead useless Faith, making no Change or Alteration on the Soul where it is ; but saving Faith acts always obedientially ; hence you read of the Obedience of Faith, *Rom. xvi. 26.* importing both that Faith acts in Obedience to the Divine Call at first, and that it influences the Soul to all the Acts of Gospel-obedience afterwards. O, says the returning Sinner, that is making this obediential Address to a God in Christ, I have been a fugitive Servant to the most glorious Lord and Master ; I have deserted his Service, and denied my Obedience ; but now, Lord, nail my Ear to thy Door-post, that I may serve thee for ever ; nail my Heart to thy Service,

that no Trouble, Temptation, Devil or Desertion may drive me away from thee; nail my Eyes to thy Service, that I may never look upon Vanity. nail my Hands to thy Service, that I may never do an ill Turn; nail my Feet to thy Way, that I may never turn aside from thee: Let all the Faculties of my Soul be nailed to thy Service and Obedience.

3dly, When there is a Gathering to *Shiloh*, the regular Address to him is made *speedily*; O the poor Soul, that sees it self ready to drop into Hell, how speedily, in the Day of Power, does it flee unto Christ! *I flee to thee to hide me*, says the Psalmist: The Flight of Faith is very quick, quick and swift as Lightning, that goes from the one End of Heaven to the other in an Instant; so when the Soul is on Wing, under the Influence of the Spirit of Faith, it can flee from Earth to Heaven in a Moment. But this speedy Gathering, I understand especially in Opposition to Delays, which are dangerous in Religion: To delay coming to Christ for one Half-Hour, is dangerous exceedingly; for, if you die within that Half-Hour, you're undone to Eternity. Now, in a Day of powerful Gathering, the Soul makes no longer Delay; but is in an holy Haste, *I made Haste and delayed not to keep thy righteous Judgments*. The Man is made to flee with Speed, and to run with Haste out of Sodom.

4thly, When there is a Gathering to *Shiloh*, the regular Approach and Address to him is made *deliberately*; tho' it is with Speed, yet it is with Deliberation: Tho' none can believe too soon by a saving Faith, yet some believe too soon by a temporary Faith never having weighed Matters in the Balance of the Sanctuary. The true Approacher puts the Matter in a fair Balance: He puts the Disadvantages in one Scale, saying, what will be my Fate, if I come not to Christ? Why, *they that are far from him shall perish*: He puts the Advantages in another Scale, and comes at length to that Conclusion, *Psal. lxxiii. last. It is good for me that I draw near to God*. O, of all Gatherings, the Gathering to *Shiloh* is best: *To whom shall I go? He hath the Words of eternal Life* The Man

is not affected only with a transient Flash ; no, he sees the wicked oft in Prosperity, and the Godly in Adversity ; he sees the large and alluring Offers that Sin, Satan, and the World make ; and yet after all, he deliberately affirms, it is good for me to draw near to God and Christ : Let others say as *Psal. iv. 6. Who will shew us any Good ?* But my Say shall be, *Lord lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance on me.* *stily,* When there is a Gathering to *Shiloh*, the regular Approach and Address is made *chastly*, and uprightly : The Soul views the Saying, that Christ came to save Sinners from Sin and Wrath, not only as a faithful Saying, but as worthy of all Acceptation ; because the Beauty of Christ is discovered. Some have their Reason conquered, but not their Love ; and therefore they come to Christ feignedly, and not with the whole Heart ; their Judgment draws one Way, and their Affections another ; for their Judgment is gained, but not their Affections : As if one should marry a Woman, not because of her Beauty, but because of her Patrimony ; not from Love to her Person, but Love to her Portion. Some take on with Christ, and take Hold of the Skirt of this *Jew*, who yet see *no Form or Comeliness in him for which he should be desired.* But as it is said, *The Upright love thee ;* so they that in gathering to him act *chastly* and uprightly, they come to him out of pure Love, not for servile Ends, not to gratifie a natural Conscience, not for Fear of Hell only, but from a great Love to him, and a just Esteem of him, and a strong Desire of Fellowship with him. The Man is content to come to Christ on Mount *Calvary*, as well as on Mount *Tabor* ; when going to *Golgotha* in Ignominy, as well as in riding to *Jerusalem* in Triumph : He cleaves to him, when People cry, *Away with him, away with him ; crucifie him ;* as well as when they cry, *Hosanna to the Son of David.* He loves him when lying in a Grave, as well as when mounted on a Throne. The chaste and upright Comer cleaves to him, when Kings and Princes are
against

against him, when Laws and Governments are against him, when Potentates and Parliaments are against him, as well as when they seem to be upon his Side. It is too true indeed, that there are many unchast Thoughts, and Looks and Lustings after Idols in the Hearts of true Believers, and many Defections and Declinings may take Place; but these are wrestled with and opposed by them, and that not only by their Light and Conscience, but by their Love and Affection to the Lord Jesus, saying, *O shall I thus requite the Lord?* So that in the main they are upright. But, to the same Purpose, 6thly, When there is a Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, the right and regular Approach and Address to him is made *intirely* and undividedly. False and hypocritical Comers they come with a divided Heart to a divided Christ; but true Comers with a whole Heart to a whole Christ. The Legalist would marry Christ, while yet his other Husband the Law is not dead to him, nor he dead to it; but it is an adulterous and unlawful March, to join with another Husband while the first is living; Hence true Believers in Christ are said to be *dead to the Law by the Body of Christ*, Rom. vii. 4. *that they might be married to another, &c.* And God casts down the old Building, turns him out of that Shelter, lets him see all his legal Duties, best Performances, and most glaring Graces, are but Fig-leaves, insufficient to cover his Nakedness; and discovers the Necessity, Excellency and Glory of Christ's Righteousness; And the Man submits cordially to it, renouncing all Hope and Expectation of Life, Favour and Justification by the Deeds of the Law. The carnal Man would have Christ and his Lusts too; *But if you seek me*, says Christ, *let these go their Way.* Gathering Grace makes the Man say, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* The covetous Man would have Christ and the World too; Christ satisfies his Conscience, and he flees to him for that; the World satisfies his Heart, and he flees to it for that: But in the Day of gathering Power, the Emptiness of the World is discovered,

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and the Man sells all for the Pearl of great Price. The Man that comes to Christ, he comes for all these four Things, 1 Cor. i. 30. for *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption* ; He comes to him as a *Prophet* for Wisdom, as a *Priest* for Righteousness, as a *King* for Sanctification, and as his *All in all* for complete Redemption : And he can want none of these, because he knows his own Foolishness, Guiltiness, Filthiness, and Misery. The true Believer dares not divide Righteousness from Sanctification, nor Pardon from Purity ; yea, he comes to Christ for Remission of Sin for the right End. What is that ? Namely, that, being freed from the Guilt of Sin, he may be freed from the Dominion of it. Knowing that there is Forgiveness with him that he may be feared, he does not believe Remission of Sin that he may indulge himself in the Commission of it : No, no ; the Blood of Christ, that purges the Conscience from the Guilt of Sin, does also purge the Conscience from dead Works to serve the living God, *Heb. ix. 14.* They that come to Christ regularly then, they come so to him for Righteousness, that they may have him also for Sanctification ; otherwise the Man does not really desire the Favour and Enjoyment of God, or to be in Friendship with him who is a holy God. As the true Lover loves him, not only because he is good and merciful, but because he is a pure and holy JESUS ; so the true Believer employs Christ for making him holy as well as happy ; and hence draws Vertue from him for killing of Sin, and quickning the Soul in the Way of Duty : And indeed the Faith that can never keep you from a Sin, will never keep you out of Hell ; and the Faith that cannot carry you to a Duty, will not carry you to Heaven. Justifying Faith is a sanctifying Grace, it improves Christ undividedly. 'Tis true, as it sanctifies it does not justify ; but that Faith that justifies, does also sanctify : As the Sun that enlightens hath Heat with it, but it is not Heat of the Sun that enlightens, but the Light thereof : so that Faith that justifies hath Love and Sanctity with it, but it

is not the Love and Sanctity that justifies but Faith as closing with Christ. 7thly, When there is a Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, the regular Approach and Address to him is made *exclusively*, excluding all other Saviours, all other Helps, all other Props, saying, *I will make Mention of thy Righteousness, and of thine only*, Psal. lxxi. 16. To depend partly upon Christ and partly upon our own Righteousness, is to set one Foot upon firm Ground, and another upon Quicksand. If a Man set one Foot upon a Rock, and another upon the deep Water, and lean to them both with equal Weight, yea, if he give any of his Weight to the Foot that is on the Water, he will be sure to sink into the Deep; so here: Therefore, in the Day of Gathering to Christ, the Soul is brought to say, *surely in the Lord only have I Righteousness and Strength*, Isa. xlv. 24. Thus Paul excludes the best Righteousness that ever he had, either before or after Conversion, from the Matter of his Justification, *Phil* iii. 8, 9. When he compares his best Righteousness with Christ's, he looks upon it as a Dunghill, a stinking Dunghill where there is no Pleasure, and a sinking Dunghill where there is no standing. Such is our Righteousness, if it be not excluded from our Justification before God, and Acceptance with him. If we go about to establish our own Righteousness, it sinks in the Divine Nostrils as Dung: And not only so, but it is a sinking Ground to stand upon, there's no firm Footing; the more a Man leans to it, the more he sinks in it. Christ's Blood is the only Sacrifice of a sweet-smelling Savour to God; every Sacrifice stinks, that is not perfumed therewith: Christ's Righteousness is the only sure Foundation and firm Ground for standing upon before God. As the Way of Sin is a sinking Way, so the Way of Self righteousness is little better; for the Sin that is in Man's best Righteousness trips up his Heels, and lays him in the Dirt, where he sinks to Hell, if he be not brought to build upon a surer Ground, and to take a better Way. 8thly, When there is a Gathering to *Shiloh*, the regular Approach and address to him

him is made *progressively*, as also *peremptorily* and *irreversibly*, saying, as *Psal. lxxx. 17. Henceforth we will not go back.* O, after we have tasted the Bitterness of Sin, and the Bitterness of Wrath, after the Wings of our Souls have been singed with the Flames of Hell, after the Arrows of Conviction shot out of the Bow of Omnipotence have pierced our Souls, so as no Man, Minister or Angel, could pull them out; Christ did it with his own Hand, and therein manifested his powerful Grace, as being the Man of God's right Hand; shall we again turn our Back upon him. No; henceforth thro' Grace we will not go back. The true Believer comes to Christ so as never to part with him, saying, as *Ruth to Naomi, Ruth i. 16. Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: For whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: Thy People shall be my People, and thy God my God. Nothing shall part thee and me.* Yea, the Man, having once come to Christ, is ay coming nearer and nearer to him, *1 Pet. ii. 4. To whom coming as to a living Stone, ye are built up a spiritual House;* The Building goes up gradually, and is still going forward. Some Professors are like the Mill-wheel, it goes round, yet still it stands in the same Place where it was: They go the round of Duties, and Morning and Evening Prayers, and attend Sabbath and Week-days Sermons, which is well done; but they are at a Stand, they are the same now, that they were Ten, Twenty Years ago, if not worse. But, in gathering to *Shiloh*, the People are made to advance nearer and nearer to Heaven, getting more Knowledge, more Experience, more Hatred of Sin, more Love and Likeness to Christ. It is true, the Saints themselves have their Winter-decays, but they have also their Summer-revivings that set them forward again. And thus *the Path of the Just is as the shining Light, which shineth more and more to a perfect Day.*

FIFTH HEAD.

The *Fifth* general Head proposed, was, To speak of the special Seasons, wherein this Gathering of the People to *Skilob* does take Place. When shall this Gathering be? Why, in general, when *Skilob* is come, then shall the Gathering of the People be to him: And there are two remarkable Seasons of *his* Coming, that the Text intends, namely, his Coming in the *Flesh*, and his Coming in the *Spirit*. Now, his Coming in the *Flesh*, I spoke of in the Explication; and his Coming in the *Spirit*, I spoke of, when I shewed by what Means this Gathering is brought about: Particularly the gathering Wind of the Spirit, when he gathers the dead Sinners, as it were, out of their Graves; according to that Word, *Come from the four Winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live*, Ezek. xxxvii. 9. Christ's Coming in the *Flesh* was the Beginning, and Commencement of the New Testament Dispensation, which is to last till his second Coming; and during the whole of that Dispensation, there will be a Gathering of the *Gentiles*, a Gathering of the People to him. Christ's Coming in the *Spirit*, is the very efficient Cause of all the spiritual and effectual Gatherings, that do take Place under that Dispensation; and therefore, his Coming in the *Spirit*, to convince the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment, is promised for that End, *John* xvi. 8. His Coming thus is like the gathering Shower spoken of, *Psal.* lxxii. 6. *He shall come down like Rain upon the mowen Grass, as Showers that Water the Earth*; whereupon a Gathering ensues, *Ver.* 8. *His Kingdom shall be from Sea to Sea, and from the River to the Ends of the Earth. They that dwell in the Wilderness shall bow before him, and his Enemies shall lick the Dust. The Kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring Presents, the Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer Gifts; and all Nations shall serve him.* O cry for a gathering Shower of the Spirit's saving Influences and Operations; for there will be no Gathering till then. But more particular-

ly, the gathering Seasons may be considered under a fourfold View. 1st. With Relation to the publick and remarkable Gathering of the Church in general. 2^{dly}. With Relation to the initial Gathering of Sinners, in particular. 3^{dly}, With Relation to the progressive Gathering of Believers. 4^{thly}. With Relation to the consummate Gathering of the Saints.

1st. The gathering Seasons may be considered, with Relation to the publick and remarkable Gathering of the Church in general. And, there are *four* or *five* Seasons, that have been very remarkable, for publick and numerous Gatherings of the People to *Shiloh*. As, (1.) *Reforming Times*, in the Church, have been gathering Times, under the powerful Influence of the Spirit of God accompanying Reformation Work, and leading forward thereunto. Thus was it in the Days of *Hezekiah*, when a Multitude having destroyed the Altars of Idolatry, and *Hezekiah* having joined fervent Prayers with his reforming Measures, the Lord harkned to *Hezekiah*, and healed the People, 2 *Chron.* xxx. 20. Reforming Times have been remarkable gathering Times, in *Britain* and *Ireland*. The Lord brought Gospel-light very early, particularly into *Scotland*, by which our Fore-fathers were delivered from Heathenism and Paganism : And we wanted not some Gospel-light, for the Space of five hundred Years after Christ ; About which Time, Popery came to put in its Foot among us, when one *Palladius* was sent from *Rome* to corrupt us : And tho' there was a strenuous Opposition, for several hundred Years after that, against the *Romish* Rites and Hierarchy ; yet Popish Darkness did gradually overspread these Lands, till it came to the greatest Height, in the Space of a thousand Years ; after which Time, to wit, in the *fifteenth* Century, I mean a thousand five hundred Years after Christ, which was the Reformation Period ; and now, about two hundred Years ago, the Lord was pleased to make Reformation-Light to arise, by stirring up eminent Instruments to preach the Gospel clearly, and to put to

their Hands zealously to Reformation-work ; especially in *Scotland*, even to the Extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, and Erastianism, and the solemn Renunciation thereof, and of all heretical and Sectarian Errors, whether in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline or Government. Then it was, that Ministers were clothed with Righteousness and Salvation, and were eminent in their Faithfulness to God, in his Truth and Interests, and zealous against Sin, and all Luke-warmness in the Lord's Cause : Then it was that the Representative Body of the Nation put to their Hand for the Reformation thereof : Then it was, that *Scotland* particularly was famed thro' the World, under the Name of *PHILADELPHIA* ; because of the Purity of its Reformation, having left all the Rags of Popery behind it in the Grave, from whence it arose ; which could not be said of many other Churches, particularly of our Neighbour Church of *England* : For as *Lazarus* came out of the Grave, bound Hand and Foot, and his Face bound about with a Napkin, so was it with *England* in their first Reformation. It was indeed like a Resurrection from the Grave, in the Days of King *Edward* and Queen *Elizabeth* ; but yet they came out of this Grave, bound Hand and Foot with their Grave-cloths, bringing many Things out with them, which they should have left behind, especially all these Ceremonies, Superstitions, and Modes of Worship and Government, wherein they symbolize with the Church of *Rome*, and which they brought along with them, when they left her : These Grave-Clothes they have not cast off to this Day. And alas ! many in *Scotland* are fond of borrowing from them some of their old Garments, which smell of the Prison of Popery, which they left. But with Respect to *Scotland's* Reformation-Days, as Christ, when he arose from the Dead, left all his Linnens and Grave-clothes behind him ; so he helped *Scotland* in rising out of the Grave of Popery, to rise and reform so purely, as to leave all the Rags of Popery, to be buried in the Grave from whence they arose. And then in
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these Days it was, that the Work of the Lord prospered, the Gospel flourished, Iniquity was made to stop its Mouth, our Church was glorious to all Beholders, and terrible to her Enemies, as an Army with Banners, and Multitudes of People were gathered to *Shiloh*. But, alas! one of the great Reasons, why there are so few gathering to *Shiloh* now, is too plainly this, that Reformation-work is much at a Stand, little Reformation Zeal and Spirit among Magistrates, Ministers, or People, as it is said, *Neh. iii. 5. The Nobles of Tekoah did not put their Neckes to the Work of the Lord*: Yea, Deformity, Defilement, Corruption and Defection, instead of Reformation is too palpable in our Day, wherein many Pollutions have crept into our Doctrine, much Defilement into our Worship, Partiality and Pithlessness into our Discipline, and Tyranny and Disorder in the Church-Government; manifold Incroachments made upon the Liberties of the Lord's People, and the Privileges of the Lord's House, too well known that we need to mention them all; insomuch that the very Foundations are ready to shake, and the Garden is much grown over with Weeds. O cry for the Return of Reformation days; for till then, there is but little Hope of remarkable Gatherings of the People to *Shiloh*: And as Christ commanded his Disciples to unbind *Lazarus*, when he was raised out of the Grave, and to take away his Grave-clothes; so seek the Lord may come, and take away whatever is opposite to the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of his House, and to the perfecting of the Work of Reformation, and whatever tends to hinder it. But again, (2.) *Covenanting Times* in the Church, have been gathering Times, as you may see in the Time of *Josiah*, 2 Kings xxiii. 3. when the People made a Covenant, to walk after the Lord, with all their Heart and Soul, and all the People stood to the Covenant. Thus it was with these Lands, when, after the Reformation, all Ranks were brought into holy and solemn Covenants with God: In those Days the Lord delighted in us, and our Land was married to him;

when

when, with uplifted Hands, we swore Allegiance to him, and abjured all Rivals with him in his Government : Never a Nation was more solemnly bound to the Lord by national Covenants, in the 15th Century, the 80th and 81st Years thereof ; and renewed again and again in the 16th Century, the 38th and 39th Years thereof, and in later Times also, together with the *Solemn League* afterwards, for furthering the Ends, Designs and Obligations of the former. I know indeed some dispute, and deny the Obligation of these Covenants upon Posterity : But as good *Josiah* brought back the People, and caused them to stand to the Covenant of their Fathers, *Chron.* xxxiv. 32. so we find, that religious Covenants in Scripture comprehend absent, as well as present, and Posterity to come, as well as the covenanting Fore-fathers, *Deut.* xxix. 14, 15, 22, 24, 25. Now, our solemn Covenants, that our Forefathers entred into, being Nothing but a superadded, and accumulative Obligation, to what we were previously bound to by the Word of God, they cannot but stand binding upon us their Posterity. But as these covenanting Days were Gathering Days, wherein many flocked in to *Shiloh*, and wherein God appended his Seal to the covenanted Work of Reformation, by a numerous Accession of Souls to the *Messias*, under the Influence of the powerful Spirit of God, blessing his Word and Ordinances to their Conversion ; so our, Covenant-breaking Days, on the other Hand, are far from being gathering Days. Little Wonder, when we have Occasion to lament, that our Covenant hath been broken, and burnt, and buried ; and, if our Covenant-breaking be not duly lamented, and covenanted Reformation revived, we have Ground to expect the Lord will send a Sword, a dreadful Judgment, to avenge the Quarrel of his Covenant. Till there be a remarkable Reviving hereof, we can hardly expect a remarkable Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*. (3.) *Confessing Times*, in the Church, have been gathering Times ; Times of humble acknowledging of personal and national Guilt, as you see, *Exod.* viii. 23. & ix. 7. and down-

downwards, compared with *Chap. x. 1, 2, 3.* No Doubt, there were better Days of the Gospel, in Respect of the Power thereof, with us than now, when there was a publick and solemn Acknowledgment of publick Sins, and Breaches of Covenant; such as you have an Account of in the ordinary *Confessions of Faith* among your Hands. But in our Days, we seem to be so far from taking with our publick Sins and Defections, that we are rather upon the Self-justifying Lay, as if we had done nothing amiss, and as if Matters had never been better with us. May we not hereupon conclude, that the Lord is speaking to us, as he did of old to *Judah*, *Jer. ii. 34, 35.* *Behold I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned;* While our Mother-Church is not duly taking with her Sin, how can we expect a remarkable Gathering of her Children to *Shiloh*. Whereas if our uncircumcised Hearts were humbled, and that we were confessing our Iniquities, and the Iniquities of our Fathers, then we might expect the Lord would yet remember his Covenant, and heal our Land, as it is, *Lev. xxvi. 40, 41, 42.* Not that publick Reformings, Covenantings and Confessings have any meritorious Influence upon, or are procuring Causes of remarkable Gatherings unto *Shiloh*; only in this Method and Order he uses to work, preparing the Way of the People, *Isa. lviii. 14.* and *lxii. 10.* He gathers out the Stones, lifts up a Standard for the People, and then follows the Gathering of the People to him: Therefore, while none of these National Revivings or publick Acknowledgments of our own and our Forefathers Iniquities, appear; little wonder, that, instead of a Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, we see Clouds gathering in our Sky, and more and more National Bondage and Thralldom taking Place. We walk contrary to God, and God walks contrary to us, and will punish seven times more for our Iniquities. Therefore, if you would wish for a remarkable Gathering, O cry for a remarkable Outpouring of the Spirit of Repentance
and

and Reformation, whereof there is so little to be seen in Church or State in our Day. O seek for a Return of his departed Glory, and that our Land may not be called *Lo-ammi* and *Lo-ruhamah*, as it is said, *Hof. i.* but rather *Ammi* and *Ruhamah*, *Hof. ii.* and that we may be called *Hephzibah* and *Beulah* *Isa. lxii.* 4. that the Lord may yet delight in us, and our Land may yet again be married. But, (4.) *Suffering and Contending Times* in the Church have been remarkable gathering Times. It was in Time of Persecution and Suffering of the Church, that such great Numbers of People were converted and gathered in to Christ in the primitive Ages, as you see, *Acts iv. 4.* Times of Contending for the Faith have been Times of Conveining to Christ the glorious Object of Faith; Yea, scattering Times have been gathering Times, when the Lord hath scattered his Servants abroad, that, by the Preaching of the Word in every Airth to which they were scattered, there might be a Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, as you see it was, *Acts viii. 4.* and particularly *Acts xi. 19, 20. 21.* Thus the Jewish Persecution first, and then the primitive Pagan Persecutions next; especially the second under *Domitian*, which was about the 69th Year of Christ; and the 9th and 10th under *Aurelius* and *Dioclesian*, as Historians relate, were the very Means of bringing the Gospel first to *Scotland*, while eminent Men fled from these dreadful Tempests unto this Land, and so planted the Gospel here. Suffering Times, persecuting Times, and hiding Times, have been gathering Times in the Church. Some old Persons here, perhaps, have been Witnesses to Days of Power in the Time of Persecution, in the late suffering Times in *Scotland*. Our Fathers have told us, how the Lord appeared for them and with them, when Men were appearing most bloodily against them: They have heard the best News from Heaven, when they heard the worst from Earth. God many Times smiles most upon his Church, when the World frowns most against them: When the Cause and Truths of Christ are most opposed by Men, God usually

usually puts the most remarkable Seal to them upon the Hearts of many. Some can say, When they were contending most for the Truth, then the Lord hath made the Truth most sweet and refreshing to themselves, and most powerful and efficacious to others. Even a Time of Bonds hath been a Time of begetting Children to God; *Mind Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my Bonds*, says Paul, in the 10th Verse of his Epistle to Philemon. Indeed, the Lord's gathering Time is not confined to suffering Periods of the Church; for glorious Things are spoken of Zion the City of God, even at other Times, *that this Man and that Man was born there*; and I know, that it can be said of our Zion, without looking many Years back, that this Man and that Man, this Woman and that Woman was born there. But I speak of remarkable Gatherings, where it can be said, not only this Man and that Man, but this Multitude and that Multitude, was born there. And O for a Time of the Gathering of Multitudes to Christ! Perhaps sad and suffering Days must come again before we have such gathering Days, and there may be terrible Sufferings before there be remarkable Gatherings; for he whose Fan is in his Hand, *Mat. iii. 12.* does usually purge his Floor before he gather in his Wheat. But as the Day of Calamity in it self is not to be desired; so, that we may not be hopeless in the mean Time, I would further tell you, that the Church's backsliding Times have been God's gathering Times, according to *Jer. iii. 14.* *Turn, O backsliding Children, says the Lord, for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a City, and two of a Family, and bring you to Zion.* There is a Call in a backsliding Time; but see *ven. 22.* where there is not only a gathering Call, but a gathering Power accompanying the Call, even at a Time wherein they had perverted their Ways, and forgotten the Lord their God: *Return ye backsliding Children, and I will heal your Backslidings*; and then it follows, *Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* Behold a Gathering of the People unto Shi-

Ab in a backsliding Time ! O then, let backsliding **Scotland** say, Behold we come ! O let backsliding **Sinners** say, Behold we come ! O that the **Hearts of Hearers** were saying, Behold we come ! O there is no national Reformation can take Place till there be personal Reformation : If personal returning to the Lord were general and universal, then there would be a national Returning. Therefore, if you would wish to see a national Reviving, let every Person put in for a Share of gathering Power and Grace, saying, *Turn me, and I shall be turned ; Draw me, and I shall run :* And, under the Conduct of drawing Power, let us say, *Behold we come to thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* Hath your personal Backsliding, Man, Woman, been great and grievous ? Hath this been your Disease all your Days, a backsliding Heart, a backsliding Nature, a backsliding Practice, a Bentness to Backsliding in Thought, Word and Action ? Is that your Disease, that you're a backsliding Heifer, a backsliding Devil, that, it may be, thinks the Disease is desperate and incurable ? O let me assure you that there is a Healer come here to Day, that says, *I will heal your Backslidings ;* and he will not say the Thing that he cannot do. And while his Mercy is saying, *I will heal your Backslidings,* let your Heart be saying, Lord, I'll come to thee for that Healing, for that is my Disease, and there is none in the World needs it so much as I : The Church and Nation need to have their Backslidings healed ; but I am the particular Person that needs it most of all : Heal me, and I shall be healed ; Behold, I come to thee for that End. Is your Heart saying so ? Then welcome be all Comers ; welcome, welcome, welcome ; *Him that comes, I will in nowise cast out.* Nay, he will in nowise cast up your former Backslidings, but heal you, without upbraiding you ; for *he gives liberally and upbraids not.* *I will heal your Backslidings :* It is spoken without Limitation, either of former or future Backslidings ; and therefore the Fear of backsliding again, needs not discourage you from coming to him ; your former Backslidings will

not cast you out: And tho' you backslide again, yet he will not cast you off; *He may visit your Iniquity with the Rod, but his Loving-kindness will be not take away* No, he will in nowise cast you out. Backslidings: shall never part him and you, for he will heal your Backslidings; *I will heal your Backslidings.* It hath' a Respe&t to the future, as well as the present Time; not to encourage your Sinning for the future, no, no; but to encourage Sinners to come, notwithstanding of their Fears of future Fallings: This shall be my Office and Employment, so long as you labour under that Disease of Backsliding, which will be till you come to *that Land, where the Inhabitants shall not say, I am sick*: Now, till you come there, I'll ay be a Physician and Healer to you, to give you my healing Word, my healing Blood, my healing Visits from Time to Time, and to arise like the Sun of Righteousness with Healing under my Wings from Day to Day: Therefore come, backsliding Soul, and let me have all your Employment from Day to Day. O is your Heart saying, *Behold we come!* Then, blessed be the Comers, tho' they have been Backsliders. The People, that must be gathered to *Shiloh*, are a backsliding People; and if it were not such, it would be none of *Adam's* Race, for they are all smitten with the same Disease; therefore all the Backsliders here are invited to be Comers. Come and welcome in the Name of *Shiloh*, to whom the Gathering must be; and in his Blessed Father's Name, come and welcome. And if there be any Comers here, then Glory, Glory to God, that, notwithstanding all that is amiss in the Church of *Scotland*, yet it is a gathering Time; notwithstanding all our Backslidings, yet it is a gathering Season. Thus I have considered the gathering Seasons with relation to the remarkable Gathering of the Church in general.

2dly, The gathering Seasons may be considered, with Relation to the *initial* Gathering of Sinners in particular; when he begins to gather in Sinners to himself, O the Freedom and Sovereignty of his Grace, that

shines in the Seasons and Times of Gathering ! for some he gathers at the third Hour, *Mat. xx. 3.* some at the sixth Hour, and some at the ninth Hour, *Ver. 5.* yea some at the eleventh Hour, *Ver. 6.* There are four Periods and Seasons mentioned ; for he gathers some in the Morning, some in the Evening, some at Mid-day, and some at Midnight ; whatever be the Hour, it is an happy Hour : *The Hour comes when the Dead shall hear ;* and O may this be the happy Hour, with Respect to some here ! More particularly, *1st,* The Morning is the gathering Season, with Respect to some ; I mean the Morning of their Youth : The Lord hath gathered some very early in the Morning before Break of Day, before ever they saw the Light of Day ; for some are gathered before they be born, sealed and sanctified from the Womb, as well as foreknown from Eternity, *Jer. i. 5. Before I formed thee in the Belly, I knew thee ; and before thou camest forth out of the Womb, I sanctified thee ;* which some have applied to Regeneration, that some are spiritually born, before ever they are naturally so. We are sure that Infants are as capable of all the Essentials of Regeneration, as adult Persons are. The essential Part thereof, is, *God's putting his Spirit within them ;* and Infants are as capable of this as aged Persons, if not more, while natural Enmity is not strengthened by actual Rebellions. But this I pass, as more rare, and what cannot be known, but by some remarkable Effects thereof. It is not so rarely that some are gathered in the Morning of their younger Years ; so was it with *Josias*, who was called at eight Years old, *2 Kings xxii. 1, 2.* so was it with young *Timothy*, who *knew the holy Scriptures from a Child. 2 Tim. iii. 15.* And, if the Morning of Youth be a gathering Season unto *Shiloh*, let this encourage young Children, that are here, to remember their Creator and Redeemer, in the Days of their Youth ; O remember to seek him early : *I love them that love me, says God, and they that seek me early shall find me.* See also *Psal. cx. 3.* *2dly,* The Evening is the gathering Season, with Respect

spe& to some : God gathers some in the Evening of
 their old Age. Thus we find *Abraham* was gathered
 in his old Age, he was 75 Years old : when God first
 called him, *Gen. xii. 4.* and it is probable that *Ni-
 code-
 mus* was an old Man, before he was born again, as ap-
 pears from *John. iii. 4.* Is there any old Sinner here,
 that hath been a Transgressor from the Womb, and
 been living without Christ all your Days? O, it is
 more than Time you were gathered in to *Shiloh*. O
 hath the Devil got the Morning, and the Noontide
 of your Day, and will you give him the Evening too?
 O he hath got too much of your Time already; let
 Christ have the rest, if he can have no more. I dare
 not say, that he will not take what the Devil hath left,
 for I have no Warrant from the Word, to say, That
 old Age cannot be God's gathering Time : I am sure
 my Text excludes neither Old nor Young, *To him shall
 the Gathering of the People be*; therefore let even old and
 dying People gather in to the new and living Way,
 which is consecrated for us, thro' the Vail of the
 Mediator's Flesh : Sure it is the best Way, that you
 can take, before you be gathered into a Grave. 3dly,
 The Mid-day is God's gathering Season, with Respect
 to some : I mean the middle Time of their Age; and
 whom God gathers, he most ordinarily gathers about
 the Midst of their Days. Some have judged, that
 God's Remnant are most ordinarily gathered in, be-
 twixt the Years of 15 and 25. Others, between 14
 and 40. But I dare not limit the holy One of *Israel*;
 only, seeing the most Part here are, perhaps, such as
 are about the Midst of their Day, O, look to God,
 to hallow the Middle of your Days, as *Solomon* hal-
 lowed the Middle of the Court, 2 *Chron. vii. 7.* And
 when God says to the *Messias*, *To him shall the gathering
 of the People be*; let all the People say, *Amen*. Ye that
 are young, ye that are old, and ye that are betwixt
 the two, O say, *Amen*, let gathering Power come.
 4thly, The Midnight is a gathering Season, with Re-
 spect to some : I mean not only a Midnight Time of
 Death and approaching Eternity, at which Season
 God

God hath gathered some, as he did the Thief on the Cross, tho' it is not his ordinary Time; but also a Midnight-State of Security, when the Soul is in a dead Sleep, even such a Time hath been a gathering Time. I need not insist here on *Manasseh*, *Mary Magdalene*, and others: When did the Day of Grace dawn upon *Saul*, afterwards *Paul*? Even when it was the darkest Hour in the Night, when he was sleeping most sound in the Bed of Security. It is true his Body was not sleeping, for he was riding furiously to *Damascus*; but his Soul was so far asleep, that he was snoring and breathing very high in his Sleep, *Acts* ix. 1. He was breathing out Threatnings and Slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord: Behold, even at Midnight there came a Cry from Heaven, that awakened him, and roused him to seek Jesus. Now it is, perhaps, a Midnight-time with some here; they are sleeping and breathing in their Sleep, breathing out Enmity against God, and the People of God, and the Way of God; but a Midnight Time may be a gathering Time, as it is said, *Matth.* xxv. 6. when all the Virgins, wise and foolish, were slumbering and sleeping, that at Midnight there came a Cry, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him*; so tho' it be Midnight with the Church, and Midnight with poor miserable secure Souls; yet at Midnight there is a Cry in this Gospel, Behold *Shiloh* is come, and let the Gathering of the People be to him; go forth and meet him; for behold he comes with Salvation. There is the initial Gathering.

3dly, The gathering Seasons may be considered, with Relation to the *progressive* Gathering of Believers in whom the good Work is begun, and who have either now, or at some former Time been engaged to come to *Shiloh*; yet they need to be still coming to him, and still gathering under his Wings. Now, many are the gathering Seasons, that relate to the Believer's *progressive* Gathering, and advances in Nearness to, and Communion with the Lord. I shall consider them, for Distinction and Memory's Sake, in these four

four Periods ; namely, of Summer, Winter, Spring, and Harvest. And, (1.) There are *Summer-Times* of Refreshment, that Believers sometimes have immediately after the gathering Harvest of Conversion ; and these Summer-times are further gathering Times, and contribute to their progressive *Gathering*. When the Soul hath been long under Guilt and Wrath, and under the Frowns and Displeasure of God, and had long seen the Gates of Heaven barred against him, and the Mouth of Hell open to receive him ; then readily the Lord comes in, and speaks Peace to the Soul, saying, *I, even I am he that blotteth out thine Iniquity, for my Name's sake*. Harken, Soul, my Thoughts towards you are Thoughts of Peace ; here is Mercy to Pardon thee, Merit to justify thee, Blood to wash thee, Balm to heal thee, Bread to nourish thee, Wine to cherish thee, Raiment to clothe thee. Thus after Paul was awakned, and convinced, and gathered, then God takes him up to the third Heaven, and makes such Manifestations of his Love and Favour, Beauty and Glory, as he is not able to utter. Thus after the Prodigal's Return, the fatted Calf is killed, the best Rob is put upon his Back, and the Ring is put upon his Hand, and shoes on his Feet, shewing us, that upon the Sinner's Conversion, and Gathering in to *Shiloh*, God is graciously pleased to give him some choice and signal Manifestation of his Love and Favour, Grace and Glory, and these contribute to his progressive *Gathering*, *John ii. 11. He manifested forth his Glory, and his Disciples believed on him*. Hence, *Psal. cii. 16. when he builds up Zion, he appears in his Glory* ; when the Stones that are already gathered, and laid upon the Foundation, are to be built up a spiritual House, in a progressive Work, he discovers his Glory, that, beholding his Glory, they may be changed from Glory to Glory : But the Summer Time of spiritual Prosperity may be but a short Time, as David's, *Psal. xxx. 6, 7. tho' it ordinarily recurs to them in some Measure, even as Summer does Year by Year* ; yet it is frequently followed with a Winter. Therefore,

(2.) There

(2.) There are *Winter-Times* of Adversity, which Believers have, which yet may be God's *gathering Times*, for making Way for their progressive *Gathering* to *Shiloh*. And thus 1st, A *Winter-Time* of personal Affliction does sometimes make Way for their further *Gathering*: *It was good for me that I was afflicted, for before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I learned thy Law*: He had been straying, but now a *Gathering* again was the Fruit of his Affliction, according to *Hos. v. 15*. *In their Affliction they shall seek me early*; their afflicting Time shall be a gathering Time, for bringing them nearer to the Lord; hence they have been made to rejoice, in the Lord, tho' the Fig-tree should not blossom, and to glory in Tribulation, As the Ark was lifted up nearer and nearer Heaven, by the Rising of the Waves; so by Affliction, Believers are raised nearer and nearer to God in Christ. 2^{dly}, The *Winter-Time* of sore Trial hath sometimes been a gathering Time to them; gathering Mercy prevents them sometimes before an eminent Trial, to prepare them for it. Thus it was with *Elijah*; *Arise and eat, for thou hast a Journey before thee, and the Journey is too great*, 1 *Kings* xix. 7. *And he went in the Strength of that Meal forty Days and forty Nights, till he came to Horeb the Mount of God*. Sometimes gathering Mercy supports them in the Trial, and under it, saying, *Fear not for I am with thee, I will strengthen thee; when thou goest through the Fire, &c.* Thus many Times the Son of Man is with them in the Furnace, gathering them in his Arms, as he was with *John* in the Isle of *Patmos*, with *Ezekiel* by the River *Chebar*, with *David* in the Wilderness of *Judea*, and with the three Children in the Furnace of Fire. Again, 3^{dly}, The *Winter-Time* of *Temptation* is sometimes a gathering Time unto them; as, after *Paul* was buffeted by Satan, he heard that sweet Word, *My Grace shall be sufficient for thee, &c.* Yea, after the sharpest Conflict, he usually gives the strongest Cordial, for gathering their Spirits again, *Psal. xciv. 19*. *In the Multitude of my Thoughts*
within

within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul. 4thly, The Winter-Time of Desertion and Hiding, hath been sometimes a gathering Season : Let not the deserted Soul be too much disquieted, the Valley of Achor may be a Door of Hope ; you may have Occasion to say, as Psal. cxvi. 6. I was brought low, and he helped me ; you may be brought to the Brink of Despair, that you may have Occasion to say, as Psal. xl. at the Beginning, He brought me out of the horrible Pit, &c. When Jacob was in great Distress, God met with him at Bethel, Gen. xxviii. and when, Gen. xxxii. he was in great Fear that God would not accomplish his Promise, he was prevented by another Visit ; and it was the most remarkable Night that ever he had : He calls the Place Peniel ; for he saw God Face to Face, and he had told him before what he had been, and would be to him, saying, I am the God of Bethel. 5thly, The Winter of Downcasting, hath been a Time of Reviving, Psal. xlii. 6. O my God, my Soul is cast down within me ; therefore I will remember thee from the Land of Jordan, &c. And, Deep calleth unto Deep, at the Noise of thy Water-Spouts ; all thy Waves and thy Billows have gone over me : Yet the Lord will command his loving Kindness in the Day-Time, and in the Night his Songs shall be with me, and my Prayer to the God of my Life. Thus he gives Songs in the Night, insomuch that the darkest Night hath ushered in the clearest Light, according to that Promise, Zech. xiv. 7. It shall come to pass that at the Evening-Time it shall be Light. 6thly, Again the Winter-Time of outcasting hath been a gathering Time ; for he gathers the Outcasts of Israel, Isa. lvi. 8. I said, I am cast out of thy Sight, Jonah ii. 4. yet will I look again to thy holy Temple : There, you see, was a gathering Time by Faith unto Christ, when he was cast out into the very Belly of Hell, as it is called, V. 2. You, whose Name is a Cast-out, may then expect that your Name may be turned to a Sought-out, Isa. lxii. last. 7thly, The Winter-Time of Fears, What Time

I am afraid, I will trust in thee. Fear not, for I am with, &c. The Time of Hopelessness and Helplessness hath been a Time of spiritual Gathering to the People of God, *Psal. cxlii. 4, 5. I looked on my Right-hand, and beheld; but there was no Man that would know me, all Refuge failed me; Then I cried to thee, O Lord, and said, Thou art my Refuge, and my Portion in the Land of the Living:* When their Hope is perished, and Nothing but the Sentence of Death passing, then the Lord hath been gathering, *2 Cor. i. 9. We had the Sentence of Death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God which raiseth the Dead.* Yea, when the Soul hath not only been sentenced, but slain in a Manner, and laid in the Grave, then hath it been a Time of Gathering, *Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 12. Our Bones are dried, says the Church, our Hope is lost, we are cut off for our Parts:* But, behold, saith the Lord, *I will open your Graves, and cause you to come up, and I will put my Spirit in you, and you shall live.* 8thly, Yea, a Winter-Time of Sinning, and Declining, and Departing from the Lord, hath been a Time of Gathering of his People; and this is most wonderful of all, as I said before of a backsliding Time: O that is a strange Word. *Isa. xliii. 23, 24, 25. Thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins, and wearied me with thine Iniquity: Yet, I even I am he that blotteth out thine Iniquities for my Name's Sake.* There is one of the bitterest Challenges for Sin, and that backed with one of the sweetest Promises of Pardon and Pity, and of gathering and restoring Mercy: Will this encourage a Believer to Sin, because the Time of your Falling down may be a Time of God's Gathering-up? O no; Nothing will humble and melt the Believer's Heart for Sin more, than to think of the Riches of Divine Mercy, and Sovereign Grace. When he stoops down to gather you out of the Dirt, that you fall into, and recovers your Soul and your Graces. Some tell us that Musk, when it hath lost its Smell and Sweetness, if it be put into a Sink among Filth it recovers it; so when the Believer's Graces have lost their Flavour and savoury

savoury Exercise, the Lord in a Manner, lets them fall into the Dirt, that their decaying Graces may be recovered and revived. Thus *Peter* was suffered to fall into the Dirt of dreadful Sinning, and then his Graces were revived, his Humility revived, he was humbled to the Dust; his Repentance was revived, he went out and wept bitterly; his spiritual Remembrance was revived, for he remembered the Words of Christ to him; and all flowed from this, that it was even Christ's gathering Time; for while he was yet among the Dung, into which he fell, Christ looks upon *Peter*, with a gracious gathering Eye, *Luke xxii. 61, 62.* Let the Believer then, for the Upstirring and Encouragement of his Faith, know, that his saddest Winter-Time may be, God's gathering Time to draw, and should be his gathering Time to turn to *Shiloh*. Your halting Time may be his gathering Time: When your creeple Feet make you go halting in the Way of the Lord, *Mic. iv. 6. I will assemble her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out.* Your falling Time may be his raising and up-gathering Time, your perishing Time may be his saving Time; for his Thoughts are not your Thoughts, &c. And his taking such a Time, makes his Interposal at such a Juncture the more wonderful, and the more welcome. But now, as, in these Instances, God is pleased to glorify his Sovereignty, and shew that he does not ty himself to Means, in these progressive Gatherings of Believers, any more than he did in the initial Gathering of Unbelievers to himself; so to glorify his Holiness, and to put Honour upon the Means of his own Appointment, you would know also, that,

(3.) There are *Spring-Times* of spiritual Duty and Gospel-diligence, which Believers have, which are also God's gathering Times, with respect to their progressive Gathering to *Shiloh* (By the By, neglect not Means, on Pretence that Grace must do all; it were an ill Argument. Water only refreshes, therefore cut off all Cocks and Pipes) But to return, such a Spring-time as this you read of *Song ii. 10, 11, 12,*

13. *My Beloved spake, &c.* For lo, the Winter is past, the Flowers appear — Arise, my Love, my fair One, and come away. Why, it is a gathering Time, therefore come away. Now, what are these Fruits and Flowers that appear in the spiritual Spring-time, which prognosticates a gathering Time to be at Hand, yea, that it is a gathering Time at present? There are several Fruits of the Spirit, that appear in the Gospel-Spring-time, which betoken a gathering Time; As, 1. A *Believing Time* is a gathering Time; Faith is one of the Fruits and Flowers that appear in this Spring. A believing Time is so much a gathering Time, that God's Gathering, is his giving Faith, and our Gathering, is our exercising Faith. But a believing Time is also a prognosticating Time, betokening a further progressive Gathering, so as to be brought to more and more Nearness to the Lord Jesus: Hence believing Times are glorious Times; *Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldest believe thou shouldst see the Glory of God,* John xi. 40. When God's Children are in the Exercise of Faith, then the Lord is pleased to make known his Goodness. Believing Times are sealing Times, *Eph. i. 13. In whom after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise.* Believing Times are rejoicing Times, *1 Pet. i. 8. In whom though now we see him not, yet believing we rejoice, &c.* There is Joy and Peace in Believing. Faith ordinarily brings in Sense; spiritual Sense and Feeling is the Fruit of Faith: Tho', by the By, I must tell you what is the Fault and Folly of the most Part even of Believers themselves, from whence it flows that they feel so little of the sweet Fruits and Advantages of Faith, they make Sense and Feeling the Root and Ground of Faith, whereas it is only the Fruit and Effect of Faith. But know, that when Sense is made the Support of Faith, it frequently leaves Faith in the Mire; for when Sense, which they made the Ground of their Faith, fails, then their Faith fails with it. The only sure Ground of Faith is God's

Word,

Word, his Truth, his Faithfulness, which is an unchangeable Ground. Now, if you make God's Work upon you, such as Spiritual Sense, Graces, Experience, or the like, the Ground of your Faith, you'll find these to be such changeable Grounds, so much up and down, that your Faith must be up and down with them, and you will totter sooner than you're aware : Or, if you build your Faith partly upon Sense, Feelings, &c. and partly upon God's Truth, you're then like a Man that sets one Foot upon a firm Ground, and the other upon a floating Board ; when the loose floating Board fails or slips, you will hardly stand fast, however firm the other Foot stands. Who among all ordinary Believers knows not the Ebbings and Flowings, the Ups and Downs of Frames and and Spiritual Feelings ? They may rise and fall ten Times in an Hour, as the Wind blows. Now, if your Faith be built upon these Love tokens, and depend upon them ; then, as your Faith must be very wavering, so God, seeing himself robbed of the Dependance due to him, may purposely withhold these Things from you, that you may learn not to trust in uncertain Experiences, but on the living God : Why, say you, when I get these Love tokens, it is not upon these that I trust, but on the God that sent them. Well done, if it be true. But I fear it is otherwise ; for if Christ himself and his Truths be the Ground of your Faith, when you get these Love tokens, then how comes it, that when these Love-tokens are gone, and when Sense and Feeling is gone, your Faith is to seek ? I trow, when Feeling is up, then your Faith is up ; and when Feeling is down, your Faith is down. Now, if the whole Building of your Faith were upon the unchangeable Rock, you would see no more Cause of Doubting when the changeable Feeling is gone, than when it is present ; and therefore, I fear it be your Fault, Believer, as well as mine, that many Times we lay too much Weight upon that thawing Ice, and make Sense and Feeling the Ground of our Faith. But if God make you a Believer at all, Man, he will bring you off gradually from this Evil ; and if you never be-

believe till you get spiritual Sense, you will never be a Believer ; for Feeling follows Believing, and therefore Believing must be before Feeling. To build Faith upon Sense then, is like a Man setting up the Couples of a House, and then beginning at the Rigging or Roof of the House, and building it downward, such a House can never be built. This is one Lesson by the By, which tho' we should tell you it Twenty Times, we will need to tell it over again ; however, I say it is a believing Time that is a gathering Time, for Faith hath Influence upon all other Graces : It is like a Silver Threed, that runs through a Chain of Pearls : It puts Strength and Vivacity into all other Virtues : It applies and appropriates all to it self, even God, and Christ, and the Promises, and all : It is like the Spring of the Watch, that sets all the Golden Wheels of Love, Joy, Comfort and Peace agoing ; for it sees in Christ's Righteousness a Fulness, a Glory that fills the Heart with glorious Joy. Christ is the Centre of Faith, and therefore a believing Time is a Time of gathering to *Shiloh*. But lest any say, O, I do not find it a believing Time with me ; therefore,

2. A *Repenting* Time is a gathering Time, and Repentance is one of the Fruits that appears in this Spring-Time that I speak of ; and Gospel-Repentance natively springs from Faith, for, in short, it is a Turning from Sin to God through Christ by Faith ; and surely where there is no such Turning from Sin, there is no Gathering to *Shiloh*, *Isa. lv. 7.* There you see this Gospel Repentance described, in the several Parts that I have mentioned. 1st, It is a Turning from Sin ; therefore it is said, *Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts :* All Sins of Heart and Way, Thought, Word or Action. 2^{dly}, It is a Turning from Sin to God ; therefore it is said, *Let him return to the Lord :* There is the End. 3^{dly}, It is a Returning from Sin to God through Christ ; therefore it is said, *Let him return to the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and abundantly pardon :* And so it is a merciful Sin pardoning God,

God, that is, a God in Christ in whom alone God is reconciled, and well pleased : And without this Apprehension of the Mercy of God in Christ, there can be no kindly Repentance. Therefore, 4^{thly}, It is a Returning from Sin to God through Christ, by Faith : Hence it is said, *Let him return, for he will abundantly pardon.* Faith looks to this FOR, this Motive of Returning ; Faith views the Motive, and so influences the Return. As it is a good FOR, so it is a good TURN that is influenced thereby . and as the Motive to an Action is viewed, before the Act be elicited, so here the Motive, tho' the last Thing in the Expression, yet is the first Thing viewed by Faith. O ! is there Mercy with him for the like of me, and Pardon, yea, abundant Pardon, great Pardon for my great Sins, multiplied Pardon for my multiplied Sins ; O this Kindness of God melts the Heart, this Goodness of God leads to Repentance ; and so the Faith of God's Favour and Mercy in Christ, influences this Gospel Repentance. And indeed the whole Progress of the Believer, in this continued progressive Gathering to *Shiloh*, is intermixed with this penitent Disposition ; He cannot cease Repenting, till he hath ceased Sinning, and consequently till he hath ceased Living : And his most joyful Days of Communion with God, on Earth, are still attended with the joyful Tears of Repentance ; and he sows in Tears, till he reap in Joy. He never comes to Christ, by any lively Act of Faith, but, at the same Time, with *Mary*, he washes his Feet with his Tears, in a Manner, and wipes them with the Hair of his Head. But in case any should think their Faith and Repentance is to seek, therefore it is no gathering Time with them ; Why then, 3. A *Praying* Time is and bodes 2. Gathering Time : I speak of the Prayer of Faith, *Dan. ix. 20.* while *Daniel* was praying, and confessing his own Sins, and the Sins of his People, the Lord appeared to him, and gives him a Divine Touch, and tells him, That he is a Man greatly beloved : Of this we have the Instance of *Cornelius*, also, *Acts 10.* at the Beginning. God loves to load the Wings of

of Prayer with the choicest and chiefest Blessings, the best and sweetest Flowers of *Paradise*, God gives to his People, when they are upon their Knees. Thus many have found praying Times to be sealing Times, wherein the Lord hath been pleased graciously to lift up the Light of his Countenance upon them. After much Praying, Weeping and Wrestling, God usually comes, with his Hand and his Heart full of Mercy to his People ; he loves not to come empty Handed to these that have sitten long begging at Mercy's Door. But because some poor Soul may think, either they cannot pray, or they have been long praying, and yet have not come Speed ; Therefore, 4. A *Waiting Time* speaks forth a Gathering Time, *Hab. ii. 3. The Vision is for an appointed Time, at the End it will speak, and not lie ; tho' it tarry wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* God never did not will fail the praying and waiting Soul, for they that wait on him shall not be ashamed. *Isa. xlix. 23. They shall not be ashamed that wait for me :* Yea, *Isa. xl. last. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their Strength, they shall mount up, &c.* Therefore we are to wait for him, as the Husband-Man waits for the precious Fruits of the Earth, and hath long Patience for it till he receive the early and latter Rain, *Jam. v. 7. Tho' you do not reap the very Day you sow, yet, in due Time you shall reap, if you faint not,* *Gal. vi. 9. David* found this waiting Time to usher in a gathering Time, *Psal xl. 1, 2, 3. I waited patiently on the Lord, and he inclined to me, and heard my Cry, he brought me out of the horrible Pit, &c.* Old *Simeon* had waited for the Consolation of *Israel*, and behold the Holy Ghost led him to a Sight of Christ in the Temple, *Luke ii. 25.* and downward. And this made the old Man sing, and say, *Now let thy Servant depart in Peace :* O I have lived long enough, for now I have got Christ in my Heart, and Christ in my Hands, who is my Light, my Life, my Love, my Joy, my Crown ; my Glory, my All. O Believer, have you not found, when you have been weeping

weeping and waiting at the Door of Mercy, how the Lord hath sometimes caused his Love and Goodness to beam forth upon you, so as to make your Heart rejoice, and your Tongue to sing ; yea, so as to gather your Soul to *Shiloh*, and to gather all the Lines of your Affections to meet in him, as the Centre of your Rest, and so as you could have wished the Valley of Vision had been your Burial Place, and that your Eyes might never see another Sight than the glorious Jesus, that was discovered to you, when you was waiting on him in publick Ordinances, or in a certain secret Corner ? But in Case any poor Soul may be saying, O, I have been waiting, and yet find so little Success, that I fear, I am a Stranger to the right Art of Waiting. Therefore, *5thly*, A *Longing Time* may be a gathering Time, and hath been so ; for, *Psal. cvii. 9. He satisfies the longing Soul, and fills the Hungry with good Things.* Are you at David's four *How longs* ? *Psal. xiii. 1, 2. How long, Lord, wilt thou forget me for ever ? How long wilt thou hide thy Face from me ? How long shall I take Countel in my Soul, having Sorrow in my Heart daily ? How long shall mine Enemies be exalted over me ?* It seems his Longing was soon backed with gathering Influences, drawing out his whole Soul towards the Lord, and filling his Heart with Joy, and his Tongue with Singing, *Ver. 5. 6. I have trusted in thy Mercy ; my Heart shall rejoice in thy Salvation ; yea, I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.* O Believer, when you are longing, he is waiting, and waiting to be gracious, *Isa. xxx. 18. Surely you have found it in your Experience, that your longing Time hath been his gathering and gracious Time :* But, lest you mistake, know that I speak of Gathering, in the whole of my Progress here, both in an active and passive Sense ; both *passively*, that is, God's Gathering his People to *Shiloh*, and to more and more Nearness to him ; and *actively*, that is, their active Gathering to him thro' his Grace. Now, I say, a longing Time is, and bodes a further gathering Time ;

for he fills the Hungry with good Things. Some have found that Promise of satisfying the longing Soul, as clearly made out, as it is evident, that the Light of Day shines at present. But some poor Soul may say, I fear it is no gathering Time with Respect to me ; for I find no such Disposition as you have been speaking of ; it is neither a Believing nor a Repenting Time with me, neither a praying, waiting, nor longing Time with me. Therefore, 6^{thly}, An *Attending* Time, O Believer, may be a gathering Time ; your attending Time, I say, O Soul, may be God's *gathering* Time. It is true, bodily Attendance, like bodily Exercise, profits little ; when People come to Duties and Ordinances with their Bodies only, to see and hear, and hardly that, while their Eyes and Ears are sometimes shut with Sleep and Heaviness : But because preventing Grace hath laid Hold upon Sinners many Times, and taken them napping, and gathered them to *Shiloh* ; therefore I shall not discourage Peoples giving their bodily Attendance on Gospel-Means and Ordinances, even tho' they have neither an outward Ear, or inward Disposition towards a regular Attendance : Because tho', in such a Case, Justice might take Advantage against them righteously ; yet none knows, but Mercy may catch them at a Disadvantage graciously ; as it did the Man, who coming to Church, yet hating to hear, set his Elbows on the Desk, and put his Fingers into his Ears ; but while he was napping, one of his Elbows falls down, and as his Finger went out of his Ear, a Word of the Sermon came in to it, by which the Lord caught him, converted him, and gathered him to *Shiloh*. But the Subject I am upon, at present, relates to Believers, and their progressive gathering ; and it may be their Case sometimes, that an outward Attendance is all that they can win at ; they can find neither any believing, repenting, praying, waiting, or longing Disposition of Soul in them : They can find no Life, no Light, no Liberty, no Grace, no spiritual Motion or gracious Disposition ; but on the contrary, much Darkness, Deadness, Dulness, Despondency, Distracti^on,

traction, Hardness, Heaviness and all spiritual Indisposition: Only this is all they can say, Some secret Hair of Hope hath brought them to attend, and give their bodily Presence, that they may hear what God will say to them, and see what God will do to them. Well, poor Soul, even such an attending Time as this may be a gathering Time, as you may see it was with these spoken of, *Acts x. 33. We are all here present*, say they, *before God, to hear all Things that are commanded thee of God*: What they were to get, or receive from God, they knew not as yet; but all they could say at present, was, that they had brought their Souls and Bodies before God, to attend upon him in his Ordinances: It seems they had some secret Hope, that they might get some good by Peter's Preaching; and behold, it was a remarkable gathering Time, as you see, *Ver. 44. For while he spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all that heard the Word*: Therefore, if any poor Creature be here, saying, It does not look like a gathering Time with Respect to me; for it is not a believing Time, but a doubting Time; it is not a repenting Time, but rather a rebelling Time; it is not a praying Time, but rather a perplexing Time; not a waiting, but a wearying Time; not a longing but a languishing Time; I cannot so much as pray, nor pant, nor long, nor look up; I can hardly give an hearty Sigh, or a Groan upwards. Well, but poor Thing, can you say, Lord, I am here present before thee, thou knowest this is all that I can do; I have no more, under Heaven, about me, of Disposition to any Duty or Ordinance, but a secret *May be the Lord will pity*, and may be not; I am just at the Footstool of Sovereignty. Well, such a Time may be a gathering Time; when they were all present before the Lord hearing, a gathering Wind came, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. This is one of the lowest Flowers, that appear in the Believer's Spring-time, when no Grace is appearing in his View at all, but only he is presenting himself before the God of all Grace; and does not the Believer find this to be even a

gathering Time, now and then in secret, as well as publick, when all he can do is just to cast himself down on his Knees, before the Lord his Maker, as it is, *Psal. xcv. 6.* with a *Who knows but the Lord may pity?* This Attendance on the Lord, even in this Manner, hath been blessed with a mighty gathering Wind about their Souls, that hath blown them nearer to the Lord, their Harbour of Rest, than ever they were before: Therefore, Believer, however low your Circumstances may be, when you can do no more but attend, as it were, at a secret Duty or publick Ordinance, never baulk your Attendance on the Lord, and presenting your selves before him; seeing your Attending Time may be his gathering Time. Thus I have mentioned to you some of the Believer's Spring-times of Duty, and some of the Fruits and Flowers that appear therein, which speak forth a gathering Time, and bode an Harvest: And this leads me to speak of another gathering Season, with Respect to the Believer's progressive Approach to Christ, or Gathering to *Shiloh*.

(4.) There are *Harvest-Times* of solemn Ordinances, or Gospel-Solemnities, not only teaching but sealing Ordinances, which his People sometimes have, and which are God's gathering Times, and the Believer's gathering Times, with Respect to their progressive gathering unto *Shiloh*. And tho' the Lord of the Harvest, who sends forth Labourers thereunto, and takes them away when he pleases; as he hath lately removed one, that used to be an eminent Labourer at Solemnities, in *Airth*; on which Occasion, if we cannot say in Point of Paucity, that tho' the Harvest be great the Labourers are few; yet sure I am, we may with Grief of Heart say, in Point of Quality, that the Harvest is great, and the honest evangelical Labourers are the fewer that he is gone: And the only Thing that makes such an heavy Loss to be supportable is, that the Lord of the Harvest is to the fore, who can send forth Labourers, qualified for whatsoever Work he hath ado: But what I was saying, is that tho' the Lord of the Harvest makes these Gospel Solemnities

ties, frequently to be the gathering Times for Sinners, in Respect of their initial Gathering, of which I spoke before ; yet the special Design of these Communion-Solemnities, is, for advancing the progressive Gathering of Believers: And tho' the most remarkable Progress of the Believer may be upon his Knees in secret Duties, and in secret Prayer, and secret Intercourse betwixt God and him ; yet publick Ordinances are the Means of these private Intercourses, tho' the secret may be most comfortable and refreshing, yet the publick Ordinances lay the Foundation of that secret Comfort and Refreshment. It is in this, as it is with the publick Well of a City, from whence People go and fetch Water to their private Houses ; for ordinary, there is not so much Use made of the Water at the publick Well it self, till once they bring it Home in their Vessel to the private House or Family, and there it is more freely made Use of for several necessary Purposes, such as for Drink, and refreshing Meals, the liquid Part whereof is mostly made up of the Water, that was fetched Home from the Well: Publick Ordinances are the Wells ; but, for ordinary, the Children of God are not so much refreshed with the Water thereof, till once they win Home to some secret Corner with it, and there they get a more hearty Draught, and refreshing Drink of the Water of Life, than they got at the publick Well, but still it is from thence it was fetched ; and so the Foundation of these private and secret refreshing Meals, is ordinarily laid in the publick Ordinances. It is true, some that go to fetch Home Water from the Well, may, according to their Need, get a hearty Drink of Water, even at the Side of the Well, before they bring any Water Home ; and so the Lord's People may, and sometimes do, get a very heartsome and refreshing Draught of living Water, even at the Well-side of publick Ordinances, while they are hearing the Word, or receiving the Sacrament of the Supper. Now the Harvest-time of Gospel-Solemnities, for the Believer's progressive Gathering unto *Shiloh*, is twofold, *Teaching* and *Sealing*. (1.) The Harvest-

Time of *Teaching* Solemnities is his hearing Season, which frequently is God's gathering Season; the Gathering of the People to *Shiloh* is ordinarily made up in the Time of Hearing the Word, for Faith comes^s by Hearing; and the progressive Gathering of Believers is ordinarily made up also in the Time of Hearing the Word, for the Increase of Faith comes by Hearing, 1 *Pet.* ii. 2. *As new born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.* And hence, the Doctrine of the Gospel is the ordinary Means of working and increasing Faith; because it is the Ministration of the Spirit, *Gal.* iii. 2. *Received ye the Spirit, by the Works of the Law, or by the Hearing of Faith?* This Gospel is the Power of God to Salvation, both for working Faith and for advancing it, *Rom.* i. 17. *For therein is the Righteousness of God revealed from Faith to Faith.* By this Means we advance, if so be we have heard of him, and been taught by him, as the Truth is in Jesus, *Eph.* iv. 21. The Gospel is like a Ladder, by which we climb up to a God in Christ, when he is gathering us to him; and every Truth of the Gospel is like so many Steps, or Rounds of the Ladder, and every one of them should be maintained and contended for: If any of the Rounds of the Ladder be broken off, you're in Danger of falling down, and your Climbing up is rendred more difficult or impossible: Every Truth denied, or Error maintained, is like a Cutting out, or Breaking off a Round of the Ladder; and whenever a Breach is made in it, the Climbing up by it is rendered impracticable, if it be a fundamental Error; or greatly obstructed, if it nearly concern the Fundamentals of Religion: We need therefore to be concerned, that every Truth be maintained by us, and transmitted to our Posterity pure and intire. It is our Mercy, that we have pure Standards; and if any latter Acts of this Church seem to clash therewith, we hope they have no the deliberate Approbation, even of those that framed them; however all Gospel-Truths ought to be sacred to us, as well as all the purchast Liberties and

Privileges in God's House ; the Loss of the least whereof, is the Loss of a Jewel of the Mediator's Crown : Christ is the Head and Centre of all Gospel-Truth, and we ought to hold by the Head ; and so we shall hold by the Truth, as it is in Jesus the Head. The Apostle complains of some, their not holding the Head, *Col. ii. 19.* Some instead of holding the Head, they hold by the Feet : It is enough to them that such a good Man, or such a learned Man says so and so, concerning this or that Truth ; and so let the Head go, and hold by the Feet, not regarding the Truth, as it is in Jesus ; but the Truth, as it is delivered by such a Man, whom they esteem, or such another Man that hath this or that good Character : But we ought to hang and hold by the Head, and not to hang our Faith at the Belt of any Man or Angel ; *For, if we, or an Angel from Heaven preach another Doctrine, let him be accursed, Gal. i. 8.* Now, I say, that the Gospel-Season is the gathering Season ; while Gospel-Truths are published, they are the Standard of the Captain of Salvation, to which the Gathering of his Soldiers should be, and will be when the Gospel comes, not in Word only, but in Power. But again, *2dly,* The Harvest-Time of sealing Solemnities, that is the Believer's receiving Season, which frequently is God's gathering Season, when he forwards their progressive Gathering to *Shiloh*. This Ordinance of the Supper, being, in a special Manner, appointed, not for Conversion, but Confirmation ; not for begetting spiritual Life where there is none, but for increasing it where begun : It is in this Ordinance, that the Lord is pleased, sometimes to seal up the Promise, to seal up the Covenant, to seal up his Love, and seal up their Pardon sensibly to their Souls ; and to *make himself known to them in the breaking of Bread, Luke xxiv. 35.* He brings them under the Shadow of a Sacrament, and *his Fruit is sweet unto their Taste*, and his Glory bright in their Eye ; whereas they came stark blind, they have got their Eyes opened : Yea, sometimes they get there a sweet Breathing of Glory, an holy Perfume of

of the sweet embalming Love of Christ : Sometimes a young Heaven, a green Glory, a Taste of the Grapes of the good Land beyond *Jordan*, to keep the Taste in their Mouth, till they come to drink of the new Wine in their Father's Kingdom. Many a fainting Soul hath been refreshed and revived with the Wine upon the Lees, in this Ordinance ; while He hath come, and pardoned all their Sins, healed all their Sores, supplied all their Wants, cleared all their cloudy Skies, and dung the Bottom out of all their Doubts and Fears ; and thus gathered them, and brought them to more Nearness and Conformity to him : For, as when a Man makes a Timber Vessel for holding Food or the like, the first Cast may be very rough, and therefore he smooths and fits it more and more for Use ; so the Souls of the Saints are at first Conversion but rough casten, as it were, therefore the Lord by visiting of them, and manifesting himself to them in his Ordinances, does more and more fit the Vessel of Mercy for a Fill of the Liquor of Glory : Hence, these Divine Incomes now and then that make them cry out, *O my Soul thirsts for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God ?* Psal. xlii. 2. As the tossed Mariner longs for the Haven, the Harbour ; so does the Soul, that hath met with God in Ordinances, long to meet with him in Heaven. As one tells us, *That when once the Gauls of old had tasted of the sweet Wine that was made of the Grapes of Italy, Nothing would satisfy them but Italy, Italy ;* so the Soul that hath once tasted of the Goodness of God, and Sweetness of Christ, and the Grapes of Paradise, Nothing satisfies that Soul at such a Time, but *O Paradise, Paradise ! O to be in Glory's Land, in Immanuel's Land ! O to be for ever with the Lord !* It is true, as the Lord is Sovereign, and sometimes hides his Face from his Children in these Ordinances, and sacramental Solemnities, insomuch that they go mourning without the Sun ; so the Measures of his Communications are various, sometimes more bright and glorious, and sometimes more dark and cloudy ; but as we enjoy the Light and Benefit
of

of the Sun, even when we cannot see it, because of the Clouds ; so Believers do sometimes enjoy much of the Light, and Heat, and Warmth of the Sun of Righteousness, even when by Reason of many Clouds they cannot see him so clearly as at other Times ; however every Glance of his Glory, in these Galleries of Ordinances, hath such a Soul-gathering Influence, such an Heart-drawing Vertue, that this Harvest-time may be called a gathering Season ; while all the Faculties of the Soul, all the Affections of the Heart are gathered to, and centered on Christ, and longing to be gathered about the Throne, to see him Face to Face. And this leads me to the *fourth* and last Period, with Respect to the Season of this Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*.

(4.) The gathering Seasons may be considered, with Relation to the consummate Gathering of the Saints ; and of this final Gathering there are two Seasons, namely, The *Day of Death*, and the *Day of Judgment*. 1st, The Day of Death is a gathering Day to the Saints ; for then Christ gathers his Lilies to himself, *Song vi. 2. My Beloved is gone down into his Garden, to gather Lilies* : When the Lilies are ripe, he gathers them into his Bosom ; he picks up one here, and another there ; and indeed some of the sweetest smelling Lilies in all the Garden of his Church, particularly in this and some neighbouring Presbyteries, hath the Lord been lately gathering ; and among the rest, that Lily that used to cast such a savoury Gospel-Smell, at former Solemnities here ; you cannot but know what I mean : But, O Sirs, if God shall gather up all the fairest and sweetest of his Lilies from among us, our Garden will become but unbeautiful and unsavoury: The Beauty and savour is gone, when the Lilies are gathered ; unless the Lord himself shall make other such Lilies to grow up in their Room. I remember that one of the last Savoury Smells that that Lily cast among us, at the last Year's Solemnity, was in the pleasant opening of that Word, *Now we see through a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face* : And, no
Q Doubt,

Doubt, it was in the Prospect of being gathered to the Place of *immediate Vision*, and full enjoyment of God and the Lamb. And indeed a Time of Death is a Time of Gathering of the Saints to Glory, where their dark, and partial, and transient Enjoyment of God here, is turned to a clear, and full, perfect, permanent, and uninterrupted Enjoyment: For then, they know him, as they are known; *And there is no Temple there*, Rev. xxi. 22. *for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the Temple of it*: And therefore, to him, as the Temple in Heaven, shall the Gathering of the People be. Hence Death to the Godly is called a *Gathering*, Gen. xlix. *last*. It is said of *Jacob*, when he died, *He was gathered unto his People*; why, one would think, he was rather taken away from his People; for he was dying, and all his Children and Grandchildren about him; yea, but he had People elsewhere, and better Company that he was going to, even the *General Assembly and Church of the First-Born, that are written in Heaven, the Spirits of just Men made perfect*, and all the Saints that had gone before him. O Sirs, see what Company ye chuse now; if ye be of the wicked and ungodly, your Death will be but a *Gathering* to the Devil and Reprobates in Hell; if you miss Heaven at the first Shot of Death, you are gone for ever: When a Man shoots at a Mark in his Lifetime, if he miss at one Shot, he may shoot another, and shoot again and again, till he hit; but if you miss Heaven at the first Shot of Death, you are not to live again, to Shoot another Shoot for it: Therefore, let your Life now be a *Pressing towards the Mark*, a Shooting at the right Mark, a Gathering to *Shiloh*; for these that are gathered to him graciously in Life, will be gathered gloriously to him at Death; for then, *The Souls of Believers do immediately pass into Glory*; when their Bodies are laid in the Dust, their Souls are gathered to their People in Heaven, where Christ is the Centre of the Assembly, 1 *Thes.* iv. 17. *And so shall we ever be with the Lord*. There are Angels and Arch-angels in Heaven, there are Saints and Seraphims there;

there ; but all will not make an Heaven without Christ ; he is the Light of the Place, and the Heart of the Company for ever, and to him shall the Gathering of the People be. But then, 2dly, The Day of Judgment will be a most remarkable Season of the consummate Gathering of his People to him : The Text indeed speaks mainly of Christ's first Coming in the Flesh, *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, till Shiloh come, and to him shall the Gathering of the People be* ; but it will be also true of his second Coming in the Clouds of Heaven ; for then will he gather his Saints together unto him, these that have made a Covenant with him by Sacrifice, *Psal. l. 5.* Therefore the Apostle joins his second Coming, and this glorious Gathering together, *2 Thes. ii. 1. We beseech you, Brethren, by the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our Gathering together unto him. Then will he send his Angels, with the great Sound of a Trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the four Winds, Matth. xiii. 27. & xxiv. 31. from one End of Heaven to another ;* wherever the Wind of Providence hath driven their Dust : Tho' the Dust of the Believer's Body may be scattered to all Corners of the Earth and Sea, and resolved to the original Elements, of which it was at first compounded ; yet God will gather it altogether again, when he makes the Earth to give up its Dead, and the Sea to give up its Dead, *Rev. xx. 13.* And therefore, tho' Worms destroy this Body, yet in their Flesh shall they see God, according to the Words of *Job*, wherein he expresseth his Faith of the happy Resurrection, *Job. xix. 25. I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c.* for then, as God will gather together their scattered Bones and Dust, so he will bring their glorified Souls along with him, *1 Thes. iv. 14.* and he will reunite these Two intimate Friends, Soul and Body ; they shall meet with one another, and meet the Lord in the Air : O let none of us think it incredible, that God should raise the Dead ; for in that Day when *Shiloh* comes again, he will gather together and make up all his Jewels, *Mal. iii. 17.* Tho'

his Jewels be lying among the Dust, yet he will separate his Jewel-Dust from the rest of the Dust: For as Christ is the Load-stone, that draws the Hearts of People to him, that are gathered to him by his Grace now, according to his own Word, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all Men unto me*; So at his second Coming, he will be the glorious Load-stone, that will draw all the precious Dust of the Saints together to him. You that know the Vertue of the Load-stone will know this, (which I have sometimes tried, with a Load-stone in my Hand) Let the Filings of Steel, never so small, be mixed with Dust, so as it is impossible, you would think, to separate the Dust of the Steel from the Dust of the other Earth, yet, if you bring near the Load-stone, all the Filings of the Steel will separate from the rest, and fly up to the Load-stone, in the tenth Part of the Twinkling of an Eye. O, if the Load-stone have such a Vertue, what must be the Vertue of him that gave Vertue to it? When-ever *Shiloh* comes in the Clouds of Heaven, behold, in the Twinkling of an Eye, all the Redeemed that sleep in the Dust will be gathered; the glorious Load-stone will put forth its Vertue, and they will be all drawn to him in a Moment. 1 Cor. xv. 52. 1 Thes. iv. 16, 17. There is the glorious and consummate Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*: It is true, the Day of Judgment will be a separating Day, the Sheep will be separate from the Goats, and the Wheat from the Tares; see *Matth. xiii. 30*. But however terrible that Day will be to the Christless World, that could never be gathered to *Shiloh*, when they shall be gathered together in Bundles, and cast into the Fire of God's everlasting Wrath; yet glorious, glorious will the Gathering be of all the Redeemed; as they will be gathered to him, so they will be Assessors with him in Judgment; *Know ye not that the Saints shall judge the World?* Yea, they shall judge Angels, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. They will sit upon the Bench of Judgment with Christ, and applaud him in all his judicial Procedure against wicked Men and Devils.

These,

These, who formerly trampled them, like Dirt under their Feet, will then stand like so many guilty Panels before them; and when the irreversible Doom goes forth, *Depart from me ye Cursed, &c.* the gathered Saints will joyfully adore the Equity of the Judge, and will not give so much as a Sigh or a Sob at the Terror of the Sentence against the wicked, but clap their Hands, and send them to Hell with a Shout. O that wicked and Christless Souls would fear and tremble, and flee from the Wrath to come, in the awful Apprehension of this glorious Day! Devils quake at the Apprehension of this Day, they believe and tremble, and yet sinful Men are fearless; but when the great Judge will erect his fiery Tribunal in the Air, see if you shall be able to bear up, be as stout-hearted as you can. O Man, Death is insensibly stealing away your Breath, and after Death comes the Judgment, and then comes the doleful gathering of the wicked to be the Fuel of eternal Flames: But oft would he have gathered you, as a Hen doth her Chickens under her Wings, but ye would not be gathered, therefore you'll be separated from him for ever; you would not come for his Blessing, therefore you must depart with this Curse, *Depart from me, ye Cursed; then shall they be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power.* O Sinner, flee, flee to *Shiloh*; Let the Gathering of the People be to him now, that you may share of the Glory of that consummate Gathering of the Saints: After Judgment, the gathered Saints will return, and come to *Zion* with Songs; God having in that Day gathered together, and made up all his Jewels, what a bright Constellation will these Jewels make, when they shall be all gathered together in the Firmament of Glory, *Dan. xii. 3. Yea, they will shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever. Mat. xiii. 43. Then, says Christ, shall the Righteous shine as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father; that is, even all these poor Things that have been gathered to Shiloh, as the Lord their Righteousness and Strength. O Sirs,*

this glorious Gathering Day will be upon you, before we be all gathered together upon Earth again: Some that were at the last Year's gathering here, are now gone to Eternity, and you'll never see them again, till you and they be gathered together before the awful Tribunal; and, without all Peradventure, there are here that will never see another Sacrament at *Airth*; it may be you, Man, it may be you, Woman; it may be such a Minister, or such a private Person; it may be such a Laird or Lady, such a Lad or Lass, as have little Thoughts of Death at present. O Sirs, I am looking to you, and you to me; but we will never all see one another, till we see the Son of Man, the Son of God, coming in the Clouds of Heaven, and gathering all the World before him: And therefore, in the View of that gathering Day, O let not this Gathering of People here part from one another and dismiss, till once there be a Gathering unto *Shiloh*. Now, we beseech you, Brethren, by the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our Gathering together unto him at the great Day of his Appearance, that you consent to be gathered, and that this present Gathering be not dissolved, till your Hearts and Affections be gathered to *Shiloh*, and centred in him. O choose rather to die upon the Spot, than not be gathered unto him this Day. Many a gathering Word and Call you have got these Days bygone, and Christ is saying, how oft would I have gathered you, yet ye would not! O, is he saying, I would gather you, Man, Woman? Then, What would you? Have you no will to be gathered out of the stinking Prison of your Lusts and Idols, your Self and Self-Righteousness, your Worldliness and Covetousness, your Pride and Vanity? Whatever be the filthy stinking Prison that you are like to perish in, he is saying, I would gather you out of it. And, O Man, Woman, would you rather be gathered to the Devil, than gathered unto *Shiloh*? Would you rather be gathered to a Tavern of Drunkenness, Lewdness and Carnality, than gathered to the Temple of Grace and

and Glory? Would you be gathered to *Shiloh*, or not? It is come just to this, Man, *What would you that I should do unto you?* Would you that I should gather you? Behold, he is declaring his Will in this Gospel. Is he saying, The Gathering of the People shall be to him? Does he say, it shall be? Then O say, *Amen*, Lord, so let it be. The Strength of Unbelief lies in your Unwillingness to be gathered; and if the Will were once broken, it would be a Day of Power, *Psal. cx. 3. Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power.* O, has there any Power been here to make you willing? Willing to be gathered to him as a Priest, and a Prince both? Willing to be gathered out of the Prison of Sin, as well as out of the Prison of Hell and Wrath? Willing to be gathered to him for Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and complete Redemption, and to be indebted to him for all and every Part of his Salvation? Willing to have all from him for nothing, so as the Praise and Glory of all may redound to himself? O, are you thus willing to be gathered under his Wings of Grace and Glory? Then Glory to God, for the Power that hath made you willing; or if you cannot say, that that Power is what you have felt, yet is it that Will-breaking Power you would be at, saying, O let this gathering Power be exerted? There is Hope in *Israel* concerning you. O may Sinners be gathered to him: This is God's Design by the Gospel, and we hope, it is our Design in preaching it, to get Sinners gathered. And, O let me tell you, That there is such a glorious Gathering of excellent Things in him, as may engage the Hearts of all the Sinners here to gather unto him, and all the Believers here to be ay gathering to him more and more. Why, what for a Gathering is there in him? O there is a Gathering of all Glories in him, the Glory of Saints, the Glory of Angels, the Glory of God is in him, so that he is altogether lovely: The Gathering of all Perfection is in him, and all Divine Attributes and Fulness; for it pleased the Father that in him should all Fulness dwell, so that he hath all Fulness of

of Ability and Authority to save: The Gathering of all Righteousness and Strength is in him; therefore, to him should Men come, *Isa. xlv. 24.* The Gathering of all the Promises is in him, for all the Promises are Yea and Amen in him; there is no Promise out of him: The Gathering of all Graces is in him, that out of his Fulness we may come and receive Grace for Grace; and to whom should the gathering of the People be, but to him that hath all Grace for them? The Gathering of all Blessings is in him, for all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places are only in Christ Jesus, *Eph. i. 3.* And to whom should the Gathering of the People be, but to him, of whom it is said, That *Men shall be blest in him and all Nations shall call him Blessed*, *Psal. lxxii. 17.* and no Blessing is to be had out of him: The Gathering of all Mercies is in him, and therefore all the Mercies of the everlasting Covenant are called the sure Mercies of *David*; all the Mercies of God is in Christ, and there is no Mercy in God out of Christ towards any Sinner: The Gathering of all Gifts is in him, he hath received Gifts for Men, even for the Rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them; the Gift of the Spirit especially, for he hath received the Spirit above Measure, and so hath all the Influences of the Spirit to give: He received Gifts for Men, all is for Men, and for the People; all the promised Righteousness, Graces, Blessings, Mercies and Gifts that he hath received, as Mediator, and that are gathered in him, is for the People, that the Gathering of the People may be to him. There is a Gathering of all Things in him, for he is All in all; and all Things are yours, if once you be gathered to him; whereas you have nothing at all but Sin, Death and Misery out of him. In a Word, there is a Gathering of all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, and all unsearchable Riches in him, for making you up, and making you happy for ever; and to whom should the gathering of poor People be, but to him? What shall I say? There is a Gathering of

of all saving Offices in him ; he is a Prophet, Priest, King, Mediator, Redeemer, Surety, and all Offices in one : Whatever be your Want, he hath an Office for supplying it ; whatever be your Debt, he hath an Office for paying it ; whatever be your Disease, he hath an Office for curing it ; for Diseases in the Mind, he is a Prophet, for Diseases of the Conscience, he is a Priest ; for Diseases of the Will, he is a King, and for all other Maladies that can be named, he hath all other healing Offices that can be named : Yea, for wonderful Maladies he hath wonderful Offices, for wonderful Sins he hath wonderful Pardons, for wonderful Plagues he hath wonderful Plaisters. O, is there such a Gathering of all good Things in him for the People, and shall there be no Gathering of the People to him ? Christ hath no other Use for these Things that are thus gathered in him, but for the Behoof of the People that gather to him ; and they would all be useless, if there were no gathering of the People to him. O shall he be an useless *Shiloh* for you ? And have you no Need of him, no Use for him ? O Dole and Misery ! Will you stand aback from him, as if he were an Useless Christ ? But if you have any Use for him then, all that he wants is to have your Employment ; to believe is to employ him to do all your Work in you and for you. Doing and Believing are very different Things ; if you be for doing all your self, in order to your own Salvation and Justification, then you make Christ useless, and his Death vain, *Gal. ii. Last. If Righteousness come by the Law, Christ is dead in vain.* But if you be for Believing, then know what Believing, or Faith is. Faith does nothing, but gives Christ all adoe, and lets him have the Glory of doing all that belongs to his Office, saying, Lord, work, work, work for me, and in me : And hence, tho' believing be no Doing, yet the best Believer is the best Doer, because the Work that is put in Christ's Hand is best done ; and because, while Faith does nothing, but only employs the Strength of Christ to do all, then, through Christ's Strenghtning, it can do all Things. Now, O shall

Christ get no Employment here? Will there be no Gathering to him for Righteousness and Strength? I hope some have been gathered and drawn to him, and can say, the Lord God of the *Hebrews* met with us, and made a Soul-gathering influence run through and through our Hearts. O, let the whole of your Life be a Gathering to *Shiloh*, and a Living upon him: And, now the great Gathering of the People here may be joyfully dismissed, tho' they shall never all meet together in Time, if this Promise of Christ hath taken Effect. *To him shall the Gathering of the People be.*

At Carnock, July 4th and 5th, 1725.

SIXTH HEAD.

The *Sixth* general Head was, to give you the Reasons of the Doctrine; and here I am to show you, 1st, Why there must be a gathering of the People, the Gentiles? 2^{dly}, Why to *Shiloh* must the Gathering be? Why to him?

(1.) Why are the People, the *Gentiles* to be gathered? For this Part of the Text concerns the *Gentiles*, in Contradistinction from the *Jews*; *To him shall the Gathering of the People be*, the *Gentile People*. It was in Pursuance of this Design that the Apostle *Paul* was called the Apostle of the *Gentiles*; and he magnified his Office, and boasts of it, saying, *Eph. iii. 8. To me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach the unsearchable Riches of Christ.* This is a Question of the greatest Concern to us *Gentiles*: Why, is our Name put in Christ's Commission? O, it would be good News to us; and for confirming our Faith herein, take these Six Grounds and Reasons for it, 1. There must be a Gathering of *Gentile People* to him, for filling up the Room which the *Jews* left. Christ came to his own, and his own received him not; and since the *Jews* rejected him, and cast out themselves by Unbelief, the *Gentiles* are taken in, to succeed to to them in their Church Privileges, *Rom. xi. 11. Through their Fall, Salvation is*

come to the Gentiles; and, v. 19. *These Branches were taken off that the Gentiles might be grafted in.* The Room which the *Jews* left vacant must be filled up with Gentiles, *Luke xiv. 15.* and downwards, where there the Gospel-entertainment is compared to a great Man's Supper, to which many were bidden; some reject the Invitation, particularly the *Jews*, that had the first Honour of being invited to the Banqueting-House, that is, to partake of Christ and his Gospel-Blessings; others embraced the gracious offer, particularly the poor despised outcast Gentiles, even these that were without the Law. Hence see and read v. 21, 22, 23. there you see the Gentiles called, to fill up the Room that the *Jews* left vacant 2. There must be a Gathering of the People, the Gentiles, to reprove and punish the Unbelief of the *Jews*, from whom the Sceptre is departed, and to provoke them to Jealousy, *Rom. xi. 11.* for as *because of Unbelief they were broken off*, *Rom. xi. 20.* so for the Punishment of their Unbelief; see what God says to them, *Deut. xxxii. 21.* compared with *Rom. x. 19.* *I will provoke you to Jealousy, by them that are no People.* The *Jews* had the first Offer, *Acts iii. last.* and the Gentiles had but their Leavings. But what a Provocation it was to the *Jews* to see Gentiles taken into Favour, is represented in the Parable, *Luke xv.* where the elder Brother envied the Reception and Entertainment of the Prodigal Gentiles; and more plainly, *Acts xiii. 45.* where you see how the Gentiles were received, in v. 46, 47, 48. Thus, whenever the *Jews* heard, that the Apostle Paul had a Commission to go the Gentiles; see how they were provoked, *Acts xxii. 21, 22.* It was their Sin that they were thus enraged, and God makes oftentimes Peoples Sin their Punishment; A Man needs no greater Plague, than to be left to the impetuous Rage of his own Lusts: However, in gathering of the Gentiles, God shews his Anger and D displeasure at the Unbelief of the *Jews*; and, to this Day, their Posterity, scattered up and down the Earth, are under the dismal Effects of this Anger; for, ever since

Shiloh came, the *Jews* have been set to the Door, and the Gentiles gathered in: Yea, 3. There must be a Gathering of the People, the Gentiles, to pave a Way for the glorious Gathering of the *Jews* again, *Rom.* xi. 23, 24, 25, 26. Here is a twofold Mystery, namely, that the Gathering of the Gentiles will make Way for the renewed Gathering and Conversion of the *Jews*. I shall read you some Promises you have thereof, *Isa.* xi. 10, 11, 12. *Jer.* xxiii. 3, 4, 5, 6. These, you may see, have evidently a further Look than their Deliverance from *Babylon*. *Zech.* xii. 10. & 13. 1. As we have Encouragement to pray for the Conversion of the *Jews*, so, if there were a Spirit of Prayer to a God in Christ among us, in their Behalf, who were his ancient People, we might then think, the happy Day were hasting, wherein it is promised, That the Gentiles shall further the Gathering of the *Jews*, *Isa.* xlix. 22. & lx. 9, 10. & lxvi. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. See *Zech.* ii. 10, 11, 12. & viii. 21, 22, 23. Again, 4. There must be a Gathering of the People, the Gentiles, to shew the Sovereignty of his Grace, and Freedom of his Mercy, *Rom.* ix. 15. *That he will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and Compassion on whom he will have Compassion:* The *Jews* expected to monopolize this Privilege, of being God's People and Church, continually to themselves; and few thought, that the Gentiles should become *Fellow-Citizens of the Saints, and of the Household of God*: But God's Thoughts are not our Thoughts; he shews his Sovereignty, in pitching upon what Nation of the Earth it pleases him. *The Potter bath Power over the Clay, of the same Lump to make one Vessel to Honour and another to Dishonour*: The great Creator of the Ends of the Earth does thus shew his Power and Authority, in making these a People that were no People, and these his People that were not his People, *Rom.* ix. 25. 26. This therefore was one of the great Mysteries of Godliness, Christ preached unto the Gentiles, and believed on in the World, *1 Tim.* iii. 16. This was a Mystery, that with great Difficulty could be received,

and

and believed by the Apostles; for when *Peter* was persuaded, by the Vision of a Sheet knit at the four Corners, wherein was all Manner of four-footed Beasts, and creeping Things, and Fowls of the Air, not to despise the *Gentiles* as common and unclean, and accordingly had preached the Gospel with Success to them, he was accused by the rest of the Apostles, *Acts* xi. 1, 2, 3. till *Peter* making his Defence, *They held their Peace, and glorified God, saying, then hath God granted to the Gentiles Repentance unto Life, Ver. 18.* And in all this, the Lord acted in a Suitableness to his ancient Promise, concerning the Calling and Inbringing of the *Gentiles*. It is long since God promised to *Noah*, saying, *God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the Tents of Shem,* *Gen.* ix. 27. Now of *Japhet* came the *Gentiles*, *Gen.* x. 5. and of *Shem* came the *Jews*; so that by this Prophecy, there is a clear Prediction of the Conversion of the *Gentiles*, and their inheriting the Privileges of the *Jews*, to the Praise of sovereign Grace. 5. There must be a Gathering of the People, the *Gentiles*, to shew the Extent and Sufficiency of his Grace, as well as the Sovereignty and Freedom of it: How extensive is his Grace and Goodness, in Gathering in the *Gentiles*, as well as the *Jews*, under the Wings of his Favour and Mercy? While he sets open his entertaining-room Doors to Sinners, out of every Tongue, and Nation, and Kindred, where neither *Jew* nor *Greek*, Circumcision nor Uncircumcision, Barbarian, *Scythian*, Bond nor Free are excluded; but all are one and alike in *Jesus Christ*, *Gal.* iii. 28. *Col.* iii. 11. Herein he appears to act with a Greatness like himself, becoming his boundless Infinity, and not after the Manner of Men, but like a God; and so signalize his Goodness beyond the Compass of Man; *For he is God, and not Man*, *Hos.* xi. 9. It were a Diminution of the Glory of his Grace, if it were said, This is Nothing, but what a Man might do. It is his Glory, to act in such a Manner, as is proper to none but a God, a God of boundless Grace and unparallelled Goodness; that when poor Dogs, Pagans, *Gentiles* find

find his Goodness, even extending to them Cast-aways, that were rejected of Men, they may have it to say, *Is this the Manner of Men, O Lord?* 6. There must be a Gathering of the People, the *Gentiles*, to shew the Glory and Greatness of Christ's Kingdom; *That his Dominion reacheth from Sea to Sea, and from the River to the Ends of the Earth*: See *Psal. lxxii. 8. 10.* As it is the Glory of a King, to have many Subjects, a numerous Train, and a great Retinue; so it is the Glory of our *Shiloh*, that the Gathering of the People is unto him, even *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; and so many the more to celebrate the Praises of free Grace, and to adorn the Triumph of his glorious Throne above, with loud Acclamations of *Grace, Grace.* *Solomon* tells us, *Prov. xiv. 28.* That the Glory of a King is in the Multitude of his Subjects; so it is the Glory of King Jesus, to have a Multitude of People gathered to him; and O, that he may get Honour here this Day, by gathering a Multitude of Souls, that they may come and set the Crown upon the Head of an exalted Jesus!

(2.) Why to *Shiloh* must the Gathering of the People be? Why, 1st. To him must the Gathering of the People be, because to him the Headship and Government of the People does belong: All the People, that come of *Adam*, have lost their Head since *Adam's* Fall; or, if they have no other Head than the first *Adam*, they are no better than an headless Company, yea and worse; for, from *Adam* their first Head, there is Nothing but Sin, and Death conveyed, *Rom. v. 12.* But now, the second *Adam*, the promised *Shiloh*, is constitute the Head of the People, the Head of the Body the Church, *That in all Things he might have the Pre-eminence*, *Col. i. 18.* and to whom should the Gathering of the People be, but to him, who is the Head of the People, and the Head over all Things to the Church? *Eph. i. 22.* He is the Head influential and political: The Head of Influences; for all the Influences of Light, and Life, and Strength, and Comfort,

come

come from him : The Head of Government ; for, *Isa. ix. 6. The Government is laid upon his Shoulders, and of the Increase of his Government and Peace there shall be no End ; upon the Throne of David, and upon his Kingdom to order it, and to establish it with Judgment and Justice for ever.* Ver. 7. The Sceptre is departed from Judah ; but it shall never depart from Jesus, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah : The Sceptre is fallen into his Hand ; and to whom should the Gathering of the People be, but under the Sceptre of this glorious King ? O that there were a Flocking to touch the Sceptre of King Jesus ! For God hath made this Jesus, who was crucified, to be both Lord and Christ, *Acts ii. 36. He hath set his King upon his holy Hill of Zion, Psal. ii. 6. He hath exalted him, by his right Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, Acts v. 31.* The Sceptre, and the Lawgiver is departed from Judah, from the Jews, since Shiloh came ; but the Sceptre and the Lawgiver is come to the Gentiles ; For, *the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us, Isa. xxx. 22.* There needs no other Reason, why the Gathering of the People must be to him ; for he being the Head and King of the People, by God the Father's Appointment, all Divine Honours are owing to him ; he must be the Object of our Faith, Love Trust, Obedience and Worship, as he is God-Man Mediator ; and it is the Will of the Father, that all Men honour the Son, even as they honour the Father ; and to him must the Glory of the Gathering be, *Isa. xxii. 24.* Upon him must be hung all the Glory of his Father's House, even all the Vessels of small Quantity, as well as great, from the Vessels of Cups to the Vessels of Flagons ; all the Vessels of Mercy, that are gathered together to God's House ; they must be gathered to him, and fastned on him, as the glorious Nail in a sure Place, *For it is he that builds the Temple of the Lord, Zech. vi. 13. and shall bear the Glory : For he shall sit and rule upon his Throne : People gather about the Throne of a King ; and O, should*
not

not the Gathering of the People be about the Throne of Grace, to see the Glory, and touch the Sceptre of him that sits upon the Throne? To him the Headship and Government of the People does belong; therefore to him must the Gathering of the People be. 2dly, To him must the Gathering of the People be; because to him does the Work of the People belong: As he is appointed to be an Head to them, so a Worker for them, ever since the Covenant of Works was broken; and so our working Arm broken, we being by Nature without Strength, it is he that works all our Work in us, and for us, *Isa. xxvi. 12.* Hence says the Psalmist *David*, *Psal. lviii. 2. I will cry unto God most High, unto God that performs all Things for me.* There is a twofold Work that we need to have performed, namely, Work satisfying to the Law, as a *Covenant*; and Work suitable to the Law, as a *Rule*. Now the performing of both these Works belongs to Christ, as he is made of God to us, both Righteousness and Sanctification: The Work satisfying to the Law, as a *Covenant*, is performed by him as our Righteousness while he fulfils the Righteousness of the Law for, and in his People, *Rom. viii. 4.* The Work suitable to the Law, as a *Rule*, is performed in and thro' him, as our Sanctification; while he puts his Spirit within us, and causes us to walk in his Statutes, *Ezek. xxxvi. 27.* And hence, says Christ, *John xv. 5. Without me ye can do nothing.* The Word is, *χωρὶς ἐμοῦ*, severed from me, or separate from me ye can do Nothing: Why then, we must not remain separate from him; but gather to him as he is the Mediator, and the All of the Covenant. The whole Weight and Work of the Covenant belongs to him, and this makes it a Covenant of Grace to us, and not of Works; because all the Work falls to his Share: There is his doing Work, for the People; for he came to fulfil all Righteousness, that so the People might say, *In the Lord have I Righteousness*, *Isa. xlv. 24.* Therefore it follows, *To him shall Men come.* Again, There is his suffering Work for the People, on which Account the Gathering of the People should

should be to him, *Heb. xiii. 12. That he might sanctify the People with his own Blood, he suffered without the Gates ; therefore let us go forth to him : There is his Dying Work ; for he suffered unto Death, and his Death was an Act of Obedience, he being obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross : This is the Gospel delivered unto us, to be preached unto the People, How that Christ died for our Sins according to the Scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 3. And shall he die for the People, and yet there be no Gathering of the People to him ? There is his Repairing Work, for the Behoof of the People ; and in the Works just now mentioned, this repairing Work is accomplished ; for he repairs the Breaches of the Law, that our Sin made : And not only is the Law magnified, and made honourable, by his Doing and Dying, while his Doing answers the Precept, and his Dying the Threatning thereof, and that to infinite Advantage ; but the Glory of the Lawgiver is repaired : The People had come short of the Glory of God ; but he, to whom the Gathering of the People must be, did repair the Honour and Glory of his Holiness, by a perfect Obedience ; and the Glory and Honour of his Justice, by a condign Satisfaction ; and this brought in Glory to God in the Highest ; yea, and made all the other glorious Attributes of God shine forth gloriously and harmoniously, in the Work of our Redemption. And hence, when Christ was about this Work, he says, *Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him, John xiii. 31. There is his purchasing Work for the Behoof the People : He hath bought the People with a Price, 1 Cor. vi. last ; And shall not the Gathering of the People be to him, whose Blood was the Price of the Peoples Souls, and the Purchase Money for buying Grace and Glory to them ? There is his pleading Work for the People ; For he is able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him, because he ever lives to make Intercession for them, Heb. vii. 25. And this is the Reason for their Coming and Gathering to him for in so doing, they shall have an Evidence, that his pleading for them hath been, and will be for**

ever effectual. There is also a *conquering* Work, that belongs to him, according to *Psal. cx. 3. Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power*: Therefore the Gathering of the People shall be to him, because the Conquering of the People belongs to him; and how he conquers them, by the Sword of his powerful Grace, you see, *Psal. xlv. 3, 4, 5*. Indeed there will be no Gathering to him, till this conquering Power come; and therefore, if you would be gathered, cry to him to gird his Sword upon this Thigh, and to send the Rod of his Strength out of *Zion*, that it may be mighty through God to the pulling down of strong Holds, &c. O that his Voice in the Gospel were powerful! Some tell us that the Lion's Whelps are born dead at first, till by the roaring of the old Lion over them, they are quickned: It is true enough in the Case of the People that are gathered to *Shiloh*; they are born dead, and remain so, till the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah* roar so loudly, as to quicken them with his powerful Voice, according to *John v. 28. The Hour comes, when the Dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live*; his Voice quickens, conquers, and captivates them: And as it is his Work to conquer them; so to conquer all their Enemies for them, whether it be Sin, Satan, Death, Hell, or the World, that they may be more than Conquerors thro' him; and all this conquering Work belongs to him, that the Gathering of the People may be to him. And in a Word, there is a strengthening Work, that belongs to him as well as a leading, guiding, comforting, and counselling Work, that I might mention, together with all the other Parts of his saving Work; *I can do all Things thro' Christ strengthening me*, says *Paul*. And it is upon this Footing, that all the Fruits of Faith come in, even all the Works of spiritual Gospel Obedience. When we go forth to any Work, we are to go in the Strength of the Lord, *making mention of his Righteousness, and of his only*; being strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might; strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus

Jesus, and strengthened with Might by his Spirit in the inner Man: *His Strength being made perfect in our Weakness*; and he working in us both to will and to do of his good Pleasure. Thus he is the Strength of Israel, the Strength of the People; for which Cause, the Gathering of the People must be to him; and because, in this manner, the Work of the People belongs to him, to work all their Works in them and for them. But then again, 3dly, To him must the Gathering of the People be, because to him does the Instruction of the People belong; for as the Purchase of the People belongs to him as a *Priest*, and the Conquest of the People belongs to him, as a *King*; so the Instruction of the People belongs to him, as a *Prophet*. And indeed, tho' I mention it here in the third Place, yet this is the first Part of his gathering Work, to instruct, and teach, and enlighten; and may we not say, with *Elihu, Job xxxvi. 22. Who teacheth like him?* He is the None such Teacher of the People; and therefore, must the Gathering of the People be to him: In Vain is the Gathering of the People about Tents and Pulpits, if their Eyes look no higher than towards poor Ministers, mortal Worms like themselves, that can only speak to their Ears, but cannot make one Beam of Divine Light to break in upon their Minds and Understandings. This is the peculiar Work of him who is the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the World, the Light to lighten the Gentiles: It is He only, by his Spirit, that can make us to know God, and the Things of God, *John i. 18. No Man hath seen God at any Time; the only begotten Son which is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* He is the blessed and only Teacher and Instructor, and therefore the Gathering of the People should be to his School, that they may be all taught of God, *John vi. 45. And every Man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father comes to me,* says Christ; where it is pleasant to observe, comparing this and the former Scripture together, that as God and Christ both are Teachers here, so the Father and the Son both are the

Lesson taught, in the Light of the eternal Spirit. And that as there is no Coming to Christ, nor Gathering to him, but under the Influence of the Father's Teaching; nor is there any Coming to the Father, but by the Son, who is the Way: So the great Lesson that the Father teaches is the Son, and the great Lesson that the Son teaches is the Father; and so the whole Teaching comes to this, a knowing the Father in the Son by the Holy Ghost. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ, in a peculiar Manner, is the great Prophet and Teacher, being anointed with a supereminent Unction of the Spirit of Wisdom for this End, *Isa. lxi. 1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach.* O glorious Preacher and Teacher! *I have put my Spirit upon him,* says the Father, *that he might bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles,* that is, Light and Instruction to the People; and therefore should the Gathering of the People be to him. O then let all the People say, *To whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life.* 4thly, *To him must the Gathering of the People be,* because to him does the Salvation of the People belong. Salvation from Sin belongs to him; therefore *His Name is called JESUS,* because he saves his People from their Sins, *Mat. i. 21.* Salvation from Wrath belongs to him, therefore his Name is also called, *even JESUS,* which delivered us from the Wrath to come, *1 Thes. i. last.* And not only the private, but the positive Salvation of the People belongs to him: Hence, whom he saves he adopts, whom he saves he adorns, whom he saves he anoints, whom he saves he justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies. O then, to whom should the Gathering of Sinners be, but to him who is the Saviour of Sinners? *1 Tim. i. 5. This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Jesus Christ came to save Sinners, of whom, (viz. of saved Sinners) I am the Chief.* O let every Man and Woman here say it with Application; say it, Man, Woman, Lass, Lad; and I'll say it with you thro' Grace, *of whom I am the Chief,* even the Chief of Sinners, whom he came to save,

save. Let not Unbelief say, It may be he came not to
 save me : For this Gospel declares that your Name
 is in his sealed Commission, if you be a Sinner ; there
 is the Gospel-charter let down from Heaven, and it
 is a Letter directed on the Back, *For you Sinners* ; Je-
 sus Christ came to save Sinners : And if you open
 the Charter, and read it with Application to your
 self, you will find that it is all for you, both with-
 in and without. O hath Christ a Commission to save
 the People, and shall not the People gather to him
 for Salvation ? Hath he a Commission to save Sinners,
 and shall he return with his Commission in his Hand,
 saying, Father, thou gavest me a Commission to seek
 and save that which was lost, and yonder lost Sin-
 ners will not have me nor my Salvation either ? They
 love their Lusts better than me, they love their own
 proud Fancy better than my Righteousness, and
 they will not believe that I have so much Good-will
 to them as to save them ; they will not trow but I'm
 cheating them with some goodly Words : I would
 gather them, but they will not be gathered ; and
 save them, but they will not come to me that they
 might have Life, tho' I have a Commission from the
 Father to give Life to dead Sinners. Why, may One
 think or say, If Christ hath such a Commission to save
 Sinners, then let him execute his Commission, I shall
 not hinder him. What is that you're saying, Man ?
 Let me hear that again : If he hath a Commission to
 save Sinners, let him come and save me, I shall not
 hinder him. Is it Jest or Earnest that you're saying ?
 If your Heart be jesting while you are speaking thus
 in your Heart, and despising a Saviour notwithstan-
 ding ; then it is a dreadful Jest. *Behold, ye Despisers,
 wonder and perish ; How shall ye escape, if ye neglect so great
 Salvation ?* But are you in Earnest, O Sinner, saying,
 Since it is his Office to save Sinners, O let him do it
 for God's Sake, let him execute his saving Office on
 me the Chief of Sinners ; for, the Lord knows, I
 would not desire to hinder him ? Why, poor Soul,
 I'll tell you good News, He seeks no more at your
 Hand than what you are saying, namely, that you do
 not

not resist nor refuse his Grace by Unbelief; but that your Heart say, Content, Lord; content to have Salvation from all my Sins and Lusts, content to have all the Salvation that Christ came to give: Why, he came to give Life, and to give it more abundantly; and when he is content to give, and you content to receive, there is little more ado, than to bless him that it is a Bargain, for he is boding himself, and all his Salvation, upon you this Day: To him does the Salvation of the People belong, therefore let the Gathering of the People be to him. *5thly, To him must the Gathering of the People be*, because to him is the Gift of the People made. God the Father hath made a Gift of the People to him, therefore the People must be gathered to him. The Father bids him ask the People, and he should have them, *Psal. ii. 8. Ask of me, and I'll give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost Ends of the Earth for thy Possession.* There is indeed a select Number that were given to him from Eternity, *John vi. 37. All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me*, that is, all that were given to him shall be gathered to him: And, that none of all the People that hear the Gospel may exclude themselves, as if they were not given; therefore it follows, *Him that comes I will in no wise cast out*, all Comers are welcome. It is as if Christ had said to these final Rejecters of him, I would have gathered you, but you would not, you never had so much as a Will to be gathered, you would not; but be it known, to your Confusion, that tho' you reject and despise me, yet I'll have a Gathering of the People to me, all that the Father hath given me shall be gathered to me: And tho' none will be gathered, but these that were given, yet this Giving is not put in as a Bar to your Coming, but rather as an Encouragement thereto; therefore it is remarkable, he does not add, *him that was given* I'll in no wise cast out, but *him that comes* I'll in no wise cast out, intimating, That as this Giving is not the Primary Object of Faith, so it cannot be seen or known, but in the Way of Coming; and they have
this

this Encouragement to come, that in coming they may know they were given to me. They that have no Will to be gathered, cannot know they were given; but all that would be gathered, may be sure they were given: Therefore let this be a Ground for the Gathering of the People to him, that as the People to be gathered were given to him from Eternity, so they that would be gathered may know and be assured, that they were given to him, *John xvii. 6. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.* They were thine by Election, and thou gavest them me, to be redeemed by me. O happy People, whom a Day of Power hath made so willing, that indeed they would be gathered to *Shiloh*; They may know that they were in God's Hand from Eternity, and out of God's Hand they were put as a Compliment into Christ's Hand, if I may so express it: and indeed he is infinitely well pleased with the Compliment, he takes an Armsful of them, as it were, out of God's everlasting Arms, and he hugs them in his Bosom, for his Delights were with the Sons of Men; and whenever he sees the Travel of his Soul, he is satisfied; and when he hath hugged them in his redeeming Arms, till he hath justified, sanctified, and completely saved them, then he will give them back to the Father's Hand again, presenting them blameless to him, saying, *Behold I, and the Children which thou hast given me.* There must then be a Gathering of the People to him, because there was a Giving of the People to him. A poor Compliment, you may think with Wonder, of the like of me, to pass betwixt the Hands of the eternal Father, and his eternal Son, in Concurrence with the eternal Spirit, One God in Three Persons; But little Matter how poor and mean the Compliment seem to be, and really is in it self, if God be glorified, and *Shiloh* magnified, and you saved. O, let the Consideration of what a large Dominion, from Sea to Sea, and from the River to the Ends of the Earth, is given to Christ; yea, a numberless Number, that no Man can number, of all Nations,

and Kindreds, and Tongues, and People, that shall stand before the Throne of the Lamb, with white Robes, and Palms in their Hands, *Rev. vii. 9.* laying, *Salvation to our God, that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever* ; Let the View of that innumerable Multitude of People that are given to him, stir up and provoke the Gathering of the People to him . He is come to demand what was given him. But then again, *6thly*, *To him must the Gathering of the People be*, because, as the People are given to him, so he is given to the People for this End, that the Gathering of the People may be to him : And hence to all the People of the visible Church, it is said, *To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given*, *Isa. ix. 6.* *whose Name is called WONDERFUL*, &c. I speak not here of his being given in actual Possession to Believers, they that take the Gift of God are possessed of it ; but I speak even of a Giving in the Gospel-Dispensation and Offer, for no Man can receive what is not given : Receiving supposes Giving, and Christ is so far given to all the Hearers of the Gospel, that they are obliged to receive him, and believe in him, upon Peril of Damnation ; *He that believes not shall be damned*. Thus he is given to many that reject him ; Hence, says Christ, to these that were rejecting him, *John vi. 32.* *My Father gives you the true Bread from Heaven*, that is, in order to be received by you ; for, in rejecting of this Bread that my Father gives you, your Souls will starve. This will aggravate the Damnation of the Damned, that Christ was given to them in the Gospel-Offer, and they rejected the Gift of God : However, the good News of the Gospel is, *John iii. 16.* *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him, or gathers in to him, may not perish, but have everlasting Life*. This Reason, for the Giving of the People to *Shiloh*, is imported in the very Bosom of the Text ; *Shiloh* is come to you, that you may come to him ; he is come in the Flesh, he is come in the Gospel, and may we hope he is come in the Spirit ; he

is come to the People, that the People may be gathered to him; and he is come as a *Shiloh*, that is, the *Messias*, the Sent of God, that the People may welcome God's Send, saying, *Blessed is he that comes in the Name of the Lord. To you is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*; This is good Tydings to all People, *Luke ii. 10. To you is the Word of this Salvation sent*, *Acts xiii. 26.* Christ the *Shiloh* is the promised Seed, the leading Promise, and the Promise is to you, and to your Children, *Acts ii. 39.* that you may receive him in the Promise. He is the Sent of God to you, that you may gather to him; he is sent to be the Saviour of the People, the Helper of the People, and sent by Way of free Gift and Donation, *Isa. xli. 27. I will give to Jerusalem One that brings good Tydings*; and for what is he given to the People? See *Isa. lv. 4.* He is given to be a Witness to the People, and a leader and Commander to the People: Yea, *xlii. 6. He is given for a Covenant to the People*; And why is he thus given to the People, but that the Gathering of the People may be to him? The People then are promised to him, and he is promised to the People; and therefore there must be a Gathering of the People to him. *Shiloh* is come to seek the People that were promised and given to him? Let the People seek that *Shiloh*, that is promised and given to them. In a Word he is the true Temple, to which the Gathering must be; He is the Mercy-Seat, at which God and the People may meet together; and you cannot meet with God but in him, for in him alone God is well pleased. And when you gather in to him, you win in to the Heart of God; for he lies in the Father's Bosom, being his Elect, in whom his Soul delights. So much for the Reasons.

APPLICATION.

I have endeavoured in the Doctrinal Part all along to deliver the Matter in a practical and applicatory Strain, and also enlarged it so much, that I need the less to insist upon many inferences, wherein I have already anticipated my self. The main Uses I design

are for Information of some Truths, and Exhortation to some Duties.

First, For INFORMATION. Is it so, that the Counsel of Heaven hath determined concerning Christ the Messias, that to him shall the Gathering of the People be? Hence see, 1. The doleful State of the Jews at present, and the lamentable Circumstances they have been in ever since the Coming of *Shiloh* their promised Messias. While a Multitude of Gentiles, that were but Dogs, are gathered to God's House, and they in the mean Time unchurched and cast out, tho' to them pertained the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the Giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises; and tho' of them, as concerning the Flesh, *Shiloh* came, even Christ, who is over all God blessed for ever, *Rom. ix. 4, 5.* Tho' they were the People of his first Love, the Seed of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, to whom so many precious Promises were made in Behalf of their Seed: Behold their *Shiloh* comes to them, and they will not have him; *He came to his own, and his own received him not.* They owned the Sceptre was departed from *Judab*, when they said, *We have no King but Cæsar*; and so by their own Confession, *Shiloh* was come, since the Sceptre was departed from *Judab*. And because they would not submit to the spiritual Sceptre of the promised *Messias*, they have been without a King, without a Prince, without a Sceptre or Lawgiver, without a Governor and Government, for 1700 Years and more, even since *Shiloh* came, to whom there is a Gathering of other People in their Room. O shall we not lament their long continued Rejection? Their Seventy Years Captivity in *Babylon* was nothing to this, yea, their Four hundred and thirty Years Bondage in *Egypt* was nothing to this! O how long, how long shall his Anger last against that People! how long shall they be under the Guilt of that Blood of Christ, which they imprecated upon themselves and their Posterity, saying, *His Blood be upon us and upon our Children!* O pray, pray for that ancient People of God, and

and that the Blood of *Shiloh* may cleanse them from that Blood guiltiness. When they were in Favour with God, the Believers among them had Mind of us poor Gentiles, when we were the *little Sister that had no Breasts*, Song, viii. 8. and now, when we are sucking at the Breasts of Gospel-ordinances and Sacramental Solemnities, O shall we not mind them, when their Breasts are cut off, when they that were the natural Branches are broken off, and we that were the wild Olive-tree are grafted in to partake of the Root and Fatness of the good Olive-tree, Rom. xi, 17, 24. O let us not boast against the Branches; *For if thou boastest, thou bearest not the Root, but the Root thee.* See v. 18, 19, 20, 21. Let us not boast, but let us beg, that they may be again grafted in; *For if the Casting away of them be the Reconciling of the World, what shall the Receiving of them be but Life from the Dead?* v. 15. The Day of the Return and Conversion of the Jews will be a Day of great Gathering to *Shiloh*, even among the Gentiles, than we have yet seen; and it would fare better with us, if we were more employed in praying for them. Mean Time, this dark and doleful Dispensation, that as yet they are under, was not darkly foretold in the Words of our Text, That upon the Sceptre's departing from *Judah*, *Shiloh* the Messiah should come, and to him should the Gathering of the People be, that is, the Gentiles; plainly intimating a wonderful Myttery of Providence, that the King of the Jews should come to the Gentiles, and be crowned King among them, that so the Jews might have it to say at length, that the King of the Gentiles is become the King of the Jews; as well as the Gentiles have it to say, That the King of the Jews is become the King of the Gentiles. Therefore, 2^{dly}, Hence see the sovereign Mercy of God in Christ towards the poor Gentile Nations, and the Isles of the Gentiles not forgotten; for he particularly promises, *that the Isles shall wait for his Law*, Isa. xlii. 4. And O wonder, that we in this remote Island were in his View, when he promised that *to him should the Gathering*

of the People be. *Jacob* by Inspiration of the Spirit of God, said it on his Death-bed, and it is now more than 3000 Years ago ; that is indeed to him not so much as three Days, for to him a thousand Years are as one Day, &c. Thousands of Years interveening cannot make him forget his Promise ; and, so far as there is or shall be a Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, so far does this Promise take Effect. There was a Promise of this, more ancient yet, *Gen. ix. 27. God shall enlarge, or perswade Japhet, and he shall dwell in the Tents of Shem* : There is a Promise that the Gentiles should be gathered in to partake of the Privileges of the Jews, for of *Japhet* came the Gentiles, and among his Posterity were the Isles of the Gentiles divided ; see *Gen. x. 1, 2, 5.* and probably this Island among the rest. For confirming whereof, I shall not be positive in averring what some alledge, That as *Gomer* was the eldest Son of *Japhet*, and of him came the People called *Gomeri* or *Cymbri* ; so the first Inhabitants of this Island of *Britain* came of the Posterity of *Japhet*, one of the Sons of *Noah*, namely of the said *Japhet's* eldest Son *Gomer* ; and hence from *Gomeri* came *Cambria*, which is the *Latine* Name of *Wales* in this Island to this Day, to which Place the ancient *Britons* retired at the coming in of the *Saxons* ; Hence they suppose that the Isle of *Britain* is particularly intended here. But I shall not found any certain Conclusion upon a doubtful Supposition, tho' it be generally agreed to by some good Historians. We may see it plain from the Event, that God had a particular Design that there should be a Gathering of the People to *Shiloh* in these Lands, and even in *Scotland*. I have shewed formerly, how early the Lord visited us with the Gospel, and that we were among the first of the Gentile Nations that ever were inlightned therewith, after *Christ's* Ascension, by which we were delivered from gross Paganism. And when I spoke of the remarkable gathering Seasons, I took notice of our Reformation-days from Popery, and afterwards from Prelacy, our Covenanting-days, and the like ; and therefore I am not here to insist thereupon

thereupon. Only, as there have been remarkable gathering Times in *Scotland*, and as the Lord countenances yet the gathering Means and Ordinances among us ; so we ought to bless him that ever Gospel-light shined upon us, and wait on him for more of that gathering Power of his Spirit, that *Scotland's* Barrenness now, and Unfruitfulness under the Means of Grace, may not provoke him wholly to leave us, and make our Name *Loammi*, &c. 3dly, Hence see the Excellency of the Gospel, and Reason of the Efficacy thereof. Behold the Excellency of the Gospel, which brings the glad Tidings of a Saviour to the People, and of a gathering Place for the poor Gentiles, as well as the Jews ; a God-Man, in whom God and Man might meet together, that scattered Sinners separated from God might be gathered to him. Behold the Condescension of our Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed in this Gospel, that he stoops so low as to be the gathering Room for poor sinful People, to which they may resort for shelter and Salvation. *Shiloh* is come, he is come in our Nature, and with humane Nature he puts on humane Bowels, that into his very Bosom the Gathering of the People may be, that all the Good they have lost may be found in Christ ; yea, that the God whom they have lost may be found in him, *For God is in Christ reconciling the World to himself*. But as herein we see the Excellency, so also behold the Efficacy of the Gospel, and the Power thereof : What was the Reason of the wonderful Spreading and Influence of the Gospel of Christ, especially in the first Ages ? It is a Matter for which no humane Policy can account, that the Gospel, preached in Simplicity, by Men of the meanest Character, should make its Way through Forces of Devils and Men, should gain so many Profelytes, subdue so many Kingdoms. Had this Doctrine been suited to Flesh and Blood, and, like *Mahomet*, indulged Men in sensual Enjoyments, and promised afterwards the highest Degrees of sensual Pleasures ; had the Gospel been designed for increasing the Stock of earthly Treasure, it were no Wonder that it should have

have gained so much Ground; for all carnal Men would readily receive this Doctrine, and tenaciously retain it. Nay, had it proceeded upon rational Grounds and Foundations, some Philosophers, at least, would have embraced it. But, that a Doctrine, that teaches to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts; a Doctrine, that teaches to crucify the old Man with his Affections and Lusts, the Lusts of the Eye, the Lusts of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life; a Doctrine, that bids look to things that are not seen; a Doctrine, that bids us leave all Things, deny our selves, and count all but Loss and Dung for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ; That this Doctrine, however highly Rational, yet hath no Foundation in Reason, and admits Consequences of no rational Demonstration, many thereof being above the Reach of Reason; that this Doctrine, that owes nothing to the Character of its Preachers, and owes as little to humane Force; that this Doctrine should have gained so great a Ground, obtained so vast Success in a Time, wherein the Profession thereof did make the Professors of it to run the Risque of Poverty, Death and Disgrace: This is a Mytery, that none shall be able to unfold, but these who plow with this Gospel-heifer, that the Gospel is the very Instrument of Divine Power, whereby ~~he~~ ^{we} gathers the People to *Shiloh*. The Reason of this marvellous Dispensation is, That the omnipotent God, who can give a Being to his Word, hath past his Word, That to Christ shall the Gathering of the People be: And Divine Power, for effectuating this Design, is put forth in the Gospel; which therefore, is called the Power of God to Salvation, while therein is revealed the Righteousness of God from Faith to Faith. And this Treasure is put in earthen Vessels, that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of Man: And O that this Power were put forth on this Occasion, for gathering the People to *Shiloh*. 4^{thly}, Hence see what ought to be the great Design of Peoples gathering to Gospel-ordinances; the leading End is,

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what the Prophet exprestes, *Jer. l. 3. They shall ask the Way to Zion, with their Faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us join our selves to the Lord; That is, gather together unto Shiloh: Let us lay our selves under the Influence of his gathering Power, and cast our selves into his gathering Arms, while he is stretching forth the Arms of his free Grace, in a preached Gospel.* O Sirs! what is the Design of these Gatherings of People together, if there be no gathering to *Shiloh*? If we look to the Views and Designs of the most Part, we will find, that the Gathering to *Shiloh*, is least of all in their View. As there were wise Virgins and foolish, so there are wise Hearers and foolish; some come to Ordinances, only for a Name, because they would not be thought any worse than their Neighbours; some come for Diversion, to spend an Hour or two in Hearing, because they have little else ado; some come for Attendance Sake, because they are waiting on their Master or Mistress; some come for Company's Sake, their Fellows saying, Let us go to Sermon; Content, says the Other, and so they go for Company; some come for Curiosity's Sake, they have heard People speak to the Praise, or Dispraise of such and such a Man, and they will see whether it be as they say; some come for Carping and Cavilling, not to be judged by the Word, but to judge it, and censure it, being content to find some Word, that they reckon may be to the Minister's Prejudice, or Repröach; and tho' they should forget all the rest of the Word, yet this they will mind, to report it to their Confidants, either out of Malice, because they receive not the Truth in the Love thereof, or out of Pride, because they would have Others, that hear their censorious Remarks, to esteem them to be judicious Persons, and competent Judges, while, in the mean Time, they are but bewraying their own Ignorance, Malice and Pride. Hence, some come to watch, if any Thing can be wrested, that is uttered, that they may set the Devil, in accusing the Brethren; some gaze for remarkable Phrases, that, when they come to their

their ordinary Company, they may have something to grace and adorn their Tales; some never come to hear what shall be said to themselves, and therefore never prick up their Ears, till they suppose they hear the Minister exposing the Crimes of Others; some come to gaze and look about them, to see who are there, and what's their Busk and Behaviour; some come to muse, and dream, and rove, and if they notice any Word that is said, it will perhaps occasion a hundred impertinent Thoughts to keep out the rest of the Sermon, and the Mind will run a thousand Ways before it can get another Word noticed, and, may be, the Sermon is done before they can gather their Thoughts together again. Many such accidental Hearers there are, that gather to Ordinances, but not to *Shiloh*. They come to meet with their Friends, that it may be convene at such a Sermon, but not to meet with Christ. They are like Children that gather to a Market, and sit in the Market place, but neither to buy nor sell. But as many Foxes have been taken, when they came to take, so some that have come only to spy ferlies, yea, to scoff and scorn, have changed their Minds before they went Home. And O that Grace would come and catch some that are here, and yet are seeking nothing here, but, like Babes, to catch Butterflies! O that Christ, the greatest Treasure in the World, should be most despised, and that the Gospel-star, which should lead you to the Place where he is, that you may be gathered to him, that this Star should not be marked. *5thly*, Hence see what is the great Mark, at which Ministers of the Gospel should shoot, in dispensing thereof; why, it is just the Gathering of Souls to Christ: To him shall the Gathering of the People be. Wo, wo to the Minister, whose great Design is only to gather a Multitude of People to himself, and enhance their Applause. It hath been indeed the Lot of some of the most faithful Ministers of Christ, to be thus reproached and calumniate, as if all their Design were to recommend themselves to the Populace, and gather a Multitude to their Faction; they have been branded

as Self-seekers instead of being Soul-fishers; and why? Because Providence hath commonly ordered that those who have been most denied and mortified to Self, have been most followed; but the more they were followed, the more they were envied by those that truly sought themselves: Hence, as none was more followed than Christ, so none was more envied by the Self-seeking Pharisees, *John xii. 19. Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold the World is gone after him.* And as we read not that Christ reproved any for following him, tho' he reproved them for their false Ends in doing so, *John vi. 26.* So, no Gospel minister will be displeased, that he hath many Fishes before the Net, in Hopes that some may be gathered; yet it is, and will be the Character of all faithful Ministers, which the Apostle relates, *2 Cor. iv. 5. We preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and our selves your Servants for Jesus Sake.* And *1 Cor. ii. 2. I determined to know, or, make known, nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.* The great Gospel-design then is, to gather Souls to Christ, seeing they can never be happy or holy, but in him. And while you find that to be your Ministers great Scope, you ought to regard and hear them as you would do a Voice from Heaven; yea, and more, while they speak the Mind of God, from the Word of God, which is the more sure Word of Prophecy; for it is the same as if you heard Christ himself: Therefore he says, *He that hears you, hears me; and he that despises you, despises me.* If you truly regarded that Word of Christ, you would hear the Voice of the Preacher, as you would hear the Voice of God. If *Samuel* had thought it was God that spoke to him, he would not have slept; but because he thought it was not God, but *Eli*, therefore he slept on. So, while People do not think it is God that speaks to them, but only a Man, they will never regard it, and never will there be a Gathering to *Shiloh*, till the Word be received, *Not as the Word of Man, (1 Thess. ii. 13.) but as it is in Truth the Word*

Word of God, which effectually works in you that believe.
 Where also that Question is obviated, How shall we know, when the Minister speaks his own Words, or God's Word? Why, let the Word of God be received, and it will speak for it self, for it will effectually work in you that believe: And when the Words of one Preacher seem to clash with the Words of another, this effectual working of the Word will teach you how to judge Things that differ really, and how to prove all Things, and hold fast that which is good. The great Mark then, I say, that the Gospel-minister aims at, is the Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*, and the pointing out of Christ to them, for Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. Surely, my Friends, we know no other Way to save you, nor our selves; if we did, how wretched were we to keep it from you? Since we have no other Calling, but to shew you the Way of Salvation. 6thly, Hence, we may also see what is the Centre of all Gospel-Truth. Christ is the Centre, wherein all the Lines of Evangelical Doctrine are gathered together, and do meet. It would not be the Duty of People, to believe in him, or gather to him by Faith, if he were not the Truth as well as the Way; Yea, the Centre and Substance of all Truth; And that is not the Truth that does not lead to him. Here is the most sure Test of Orthodoxy; whatever pretends to be the Truth, and yet tends only to lead a Man in to himself, and not out of himself to Christ; whatever Doctrine tends to make you think, you must produce some Holiness or good Qualifications from within your self, without gathering first to *Shiloh*, to get it, you may know it is not orthodox Doctrine: Whatever Doctrine tends to the Disparagement of Christ or to the Robbing him of any Part of the Glory of Salvation work, is to be rejected as Erroneous; for *To him alone must the Gathering of the People be*: And to him only shall the Glory of our whole Salvation, from first to last, belong. Christ is much robbed of his Glory in Britain, at this Day; damnable Arian Doctrine is spreading, whereby Christ is robbed of the Glory of his supreme

supreme Deity, denying his being the eternal Son of God, co-equal and co-essential with the Father. The Devil himself was more orthodox than our *Arian* Doctors, when he owned, *Mat. viii. 29.* that Christ was the Son of God, *What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Son of God?* The Devil spoke more honourably of him, than they do, when he said, *Mark i. 24. I know thee who thou art, the holy One of God.* My Text leads me to what I am saying; for, if Christ were not the supreme God, equal with the Father, the Gathering of the People to him, to believe in him, to worship and adore him, would be unlawful; it would be Idolatry. For, as the Lord our God is one Lord, so we must worship the Lord our God, and him only must we serve; and it is Idolatry to worship any other. Yea, to the Son, he says, *Let all the Angels of God worship him*; and for this End must all the People be gathered to him. My present Work allows me not to trace the other Doctrines, that rob him of his Glory, and tend to lead People else where than to *Shiloh*: Only, whatever Mask of Truth or Holiness, any Doctrine shall put on, if it tend to gather People to *Moses*, and not to *Shiloh*, or to lead them to the Law, and not to Christ, who is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every One that believeth, it savours not of the Truth as it is in Jesus, *Eph. iv. 21.* But the main Inference I designed at present, was for Exhortation; and therefore, passing all other Inferences that might be drawn, I come to apply it,

Secondly, for EXHORTATION, And I design, as the Lord may pity and assist, to direct it to three Sorts of Persons, with Relation to this gathering of the People to *Shiloh*. 1st, Some may be doubtful, whether they were ever gathered to *Shiloh*, or not; therefore I would exhort them to try. 2^{dly}, Some may be sure they were never yet gathered to *Shiloh*, therefore I would exhort them to gather under his Wings. 3^{dly}, Some are Believers, that have through Grace been gathered by him, and made to gather to him; and I

Would exhort them to their Duty, with Respect to their further Gathering to him

1st, Some may be doubtful, whether they were ever gathered to *Shiloh*, or not; and therefore my Exhortation to such, is, That they would try and examine, whether it be so or not. Examination is a necessary Duty at all Times, as well after, as before a Communion. He that says, with Reference to the Sacrament, Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat, says also, with Reference to any Season, *Examine your selves*, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *whether you be in the Faith, prove your own selves; know ye not your own selves, how that Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates?* O poor dying Mortal! will you try if you have been gathered to *Shiloh*, or not? Whether you have win into him by a Faith of his own Operation? For according as this takes Place, so will it fare with you through all Eternity. If you die out of Christ, or in Unbelief, you die in your Sins, *John viii. 24.* And better die in a Ditch, and die like a Dog, than die in your Sins. If you die in your Sins, you'll rise in your Sins, and stand before the Tribunal of God in your Sins, and so be condemned. If you gathered to Christ, you will be found in him, and so found happy, when Death, Judgment and Eternity appear; therefore I exhort you solemnly to reflect upon this Matter, whether you be gathered, or not. If all that you're worth in a World lay in one precious Stone, and that Stone were to be tried by a skilful Jeweler, whether it were true or false, whether it would fly, or endure under the smart Stroke of his Hammer; surely, your Thoughts would not be unconcerned about the Issue of such a Trial. Why, Man, Woman, all that you're worth in this World, and the World to come, depends upon this Matter, whether you be of the People that are gathered to *Shiloh*, or not. Try whether your Faith in the promised *Shiloh*, will fly, or endure the Stroke of the Hammer of God's Word? Have you no Concern in this Matter? You would be loth to put to Sea, tho' it were but to cross a narrow Ferry, in a rot-

ten leaky Vessel; and will you dare to venture on the Ocean of Eternity, in a false rotten Barque? Whatever Profession you have, whatever Blaze you make, whatever Esteem Others may have of you, whatever Opinion you may have of your self, and of your Faith, you'll be drowned for ever in the Deluge of God's Wrath, if you be not gathered in to the Ark, Jesus Christ: I would therefore offer you some Helps to make this Trial. And here all that I said upon the 4th Head, concerning the Means and Manner of this Gathering; how God acts in gathering, and how he makes the Soul to act, might be brought in; but, passing all these, I offer these few following Marks, by which you may try whether or not; you have ever been gathered to *Shiloh*.

(1.) If ever you was gathered to *Shiloh*, then *Shiloh* hath come to you, before ever you was gathered to him. The Text makes the Coming of *Shiloh* to be the very Cause of the Gathering of the People to him: As his Coming in the Flesh did usher in the Gathering of the Gentiles, so it is his Coming in the Spirit that makes the spiritual Gathering to him. Try then, if ever he hath come to you. Surely, if you be gathered to him, you can say, I would never have come to him, unless he had come to me: Now, if Christ never came to you by his Spirit, as a Spirit of Conviction, convincing you of Sin and Misery, and discovering your Need of Christ, and that you was lost for ever without him, surely you have not yet been gathered to him. You that never yet had a sorrowful Hour for want of Christ, and was never brought to a *Wo's me, for I want Christ and Salvation*, nor to a *What shall I do to be saved?* you have Reason to conclude that you was never yet gathered to him: For, when he comes by his Spirit, he convinces the World of Sin; when he gathers the People to him, he comes and convinces them of Sin, because they believe not in him, *Joh. xvi. 8*. Some never wanted Faith, which declares they never had it; they never miss'd Christ, which says they never matched with him. As he that was

never a real Wanter, was never a real and true Suiter; so it is the needy Wanter that is the steady Suiter. Thus here, Man, Woman, if you had never a Want of Christ, you was never in Suit of him, never gathered to him: Tho' he hath been in Suit of you by the Gospel-offer may be a Thousand Times, yet you being pleased with your old March your Sins, Lusts, Idols, Self-righteousness, or the World; his suit was never regarded, because you was never a Wanter; and being never a true Wanter, you was never a true Seeker or Receiver of him, and so never gathered to him: For you was never convinced of your Want of Christ and Want of Faith in him. Deceive not your self, O Sinner; you was never a Believer, if you was never a Wanter; if the Spirit of Conviction never came and made you say, O I want Grace, I want Holiness, I want Faith, Love, Repentance and all Good; yea, I want God, I want Christ, I want the Spirit. Hence it is the Property of a Believer, notwithstanding all he gets, yet he is *ay* a Wanter, *ay* poor and needy, and nothing in himself; And it is the Property of an Unbeliever, notwithstanding all that he wants, yet he is *ay* *rich and increased with Goods, and wants nothing*; hence we find some ignorant People expressing what others that pretend to more Knowledge do conceal: Ask them, Do you want Faith? O no, we *ay* trusted in God. Do you want Hope? No, we hope in his Mercy. Do you want Love? No, I had *ay* a Love to God and his People all my Days. Do you want Grace? Nay, God forbid that I should be altogether graceless. Do you want Christ? O no, my sweet Saviour, what would come of me if I wanted Christ? Why, Man, Woman, I know nothing that you want, you're not a Wanter: The Lord pity you; for, what you dream you never wanted, you never had to this Day. The Spirit of Conviction hath never come, and, instead of being gathered to *Shiloh*, you was never yet gathered to the *Porc-door* of true Christianity; for the Spirit's Coming to convince of the Want of Christ, and of Faith in him, is the
very

very Beginning of all true Religion. But if *Shiloh* hath come by his Spirit, and shewn you your Want of all Things but Sin, it is a good Beginning ; for thus he gathers you out of your false Hopes and lying Refuges. But next, If *Shiloh* hath come to you for gathering you to himself, then he hath come not only as a Spirit of Conviction, but also as a Spirit of powerful Illumination, discovering the Glory of *Shiloh* to you, even the Glory of his Person, Offices, Righteousness, Fulness, and other things of Christ, so as to glorify Christ in your View, *John xvi. 14. He shall glorify me ; for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you.* Now, if *Shiloh* never came by his Spirit in the Gospel, to shew something of the Glory of Christ to you, and the Glory of God's Perfections in him, so as to make him appear more glorious to you than all the World, it seems you have not yet been gathered ; For if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, *2Cor. iv. 3, 4. In whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, &c.* But if ever you was gathered, then the God who commanded Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined into your Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ, *ver. 6.* For as, when the Lord builds up Zion, he appears in his Glory ; so, when he gathers Souls, he appears in his Glory, and brings them from Darkness to his marvellous Light. I do not speak of the highest Degree of spiritual Light, nor yet of any extraordinary Manifestations ; all that I mean is, the Spirit's coming to enlighten your Minds in the Knowledge of Christ, whereby you have seen his Glory, as the Glory of the only Begotten of the Father full of Grace and Truth, and have seen a Fulness of all Grace in him. These are not enthusiastical Delusions, but scriptural Expressions : For, may one think or say, What is that the Man is speaking of beholding such a Glory ? I never saw any greater Glory in all the World than that of the Sun, Moon, and Stars in the Firmament. What say you, Man ? Saw you never any greater Glory than that which your bodily Eyes have seen betwixt Earth and Heaven ?

Heaven? Then I may say to you, that you was never yet gathered to *Shiloh*; for he never came in his Spirit to shew you his Glory. I speak not of weak, powerless Fancies and Imaginations that some may have of Christ's Glory, but I call it a powerful Illumination, conquering the Will, and captivating the Heart, and carrying in all the Affections to the embracing of Christ; for, when the Sun of Righteousness arises, it is with Healing under his Wings, healing the Resistance of the Will, and the Hardness of the Heart, and melting down the whole Soul in the warm Arms of his gathering Grace and Love, while he draws with Lovingkindness. And indeed, *No Man can come to me*, says Christ, *except the Father which hath sent me draw him*; and saving Discoveries are of a drawing Nature. The true Sun hath not only Light, but Heat, whereby the Heart is warmed; and the true Light is the Light of Life, whereby the Soul is quickened. If ever you was gathered to *Shiloh*, then know it that *Shiloh* hath come to you before ever there could be a Gathering to him.

(2.) If ever you was gathered to *Shiloh*, then as *Shiloh* hath come to you, so you have been made particularly to come to him, under the drawing Power and Influence of that Spirit I have been speaking of. And indeed, as none can come unless he draw them, so none can stay away, when he is drawing them: And hence every Believer finds, that as it is impossible to believe till Power come, so it is impossible not to believe when Divine Power does come; it is as easy then, as it was difficult before. If ever you was gathered to *Shiloh*, then as the Coming of *Shiloh* to you hath prevented your Coming to him, so your Coming to him hath been effectuate by his Coming to you, and making the general Call of the Gospel effectual, in enabling you to a particular Application, so as to give a particular Answer to the general Call. If you have been but Hearers of the Word all your Days, without ever applying it to your own Use, and Hearers of the general Offer and Promise of Christ, without ever seeing your selves

involved, inclosed and included in the general Promise and Offer, and without ever making a particular personal Application thereof you are not yet gathered to *Shiloh*; for, when Souls are gathered, the general Call gets a particular Answer, *Psal. xxvii. 8. When thou saidst, seek ye my Face; my Heart said, Thy Face, Lord, will I seek.* The Gospel-call is general, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*; but the Answer must be particular, *Lord, I believe, help thou my Unbelief.* When People suffer Gospel-truths to hover in the Brain, without Application, or learn Things as Children do their Catechism by Rote, never reflecting, What am I doing? Where am I going? What will become of me? And what Effect hath this Word upon me? Unbelief remains undisturbed, the Word comes and goes, and there is no Good done, no Gathering to *Shiloh*, because no particular Application. It is the very Design of the Spirit's convincing and enlightning Work, to bring the Soul to this particular Application of Christ; and therefore this Mark may clear the former. If you think, How shall I know if I have such a Measure of Conviction and Illumination as is sufficient to evidence that I am gathered to *Shiloh*? Why, any Measure that God pleases to give is enough, if it issue in the Soul's particular Reception and Application of Christ. When is it that the Metall is melted enough in the Fire? Why, it is melted enough when it runs easily into the Mould. Now there may be natural Meltings, under the common Influences of the Spirit: But, when is the Soul melted enough with the Beams of the Sun of Righteousness, or with the Fire of the Spirit? Why, it is melted enough when it runs into the Gospel-mould. There are some that have as it were too much of the Fire; these are they that apprehend themselves such great Sinners, that they *dare* not come to Christ: There are others that have as it were too little of the Fire; these are they that only think they are not so good as they ought to be, and therefore they *should* not come to Christ: There are others that have nothing of the Fire at all; and these are they that think they are good enough

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already;

already, and they *need* not come to Christ : But then only is the Soul sufficiently melted, when it runs in to the Mould. What is the Gospel-mould ? It is even Christ ; and when the melted Soul runs in to this Mould, there does it get the right Shape and Form, and there only. As it is not the Melting of the Metal that gives it a Shape, Fashion or Form, but the Mould that gives it the Form ; so never expect to have any good Form, any good Shape, any good Qualification, till your Souls run in to this Mould. It is the very Design of the Spirit's Coming to ding People out of their own fancied Goo'ness, and make them come to Christ for all. Try then, if ever you was gathered to *Shiloh*, by this, namely. Whether your Soul, in a Day of Divine Power, was made to run in to him like melted Lead in to a Mould, closing with, and cleaving to him by a particular Application. But how the Soul acts here, by a particular Appropriation and fiducial Perswasion, upon the Divine Word, under Divine Conduct, I have formerly described ; therefore I proceed to another Mark.

(3.) If ever you was gathered to *Shiloh*, then the gathering Place will be very precious to you, I mean the promised *Shiloh*, Christ himself, 1 *Pet.* ii. 7. There he is held forth as the chief Corner Stone, to which all the Stones of the spiritual Building are gathered together, and unite ; and to all such as are gathered to him, it is declared, he is precious. And the Word signifies, he is honourable, he is an Honour to them, and they put Honour upon him, and entertain him honourably, in a Suitableness to his high Quality, as he is God-Man, and particularly as he is the *Shiloh*, that is, the Messias, the Sent of God, the Father's extraordinary Ambassador. Some esteem Christ, but not according to his Grandeur and Glory, and therefore it is evident, they are not gathered to him, as the *Shiloh*, the Sent of God ; but they that are gathered to him, they receive, esteem, and entertain him, according to his Dignity. If a Subject shall receive, or entertain his Prince, or the King's extraordinary

Ambassador, no otherwise than he would do his Country Neighbour, this would be interpreted a Contempt : So if Christ be not received, esteemed and entertained, according to his Grandeur, Dignity and State, he counts it a Contempt, rather than a due Reception or Estimation of him. If Christ be not esteemed as a King, he is but disesteemed ; if he be not honoured as the Father's Ambassador-Extraordinary, he is but dishonoured : For, as *Shiloh*, he hath Heaven's sealed Commission, *Him bath God the Father sealed.* The Unbelieving *Jews* were content to receive and esteem Christ as a great Prophet, as the *Mahometans* do ; but they would not receive and entertain him according to his Greatness, Grandeur and Glory, which he was invested with ; therefore they were challenged as Rejecters and Despisers of him, *Acts* xiii. 41. *He came to his own, and his own received him not ;* For they did not receive him, as the Son of God, and the Sent of God : Whereas, it is said of the Believing *Jews*, who received Christ, That they beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only Begotten of the Father, that is, they so received him in all his Glory, Grandeur, Majesty and Splendor, that they esteemed honourably of him. Hence, says Christ, *John* xvii. 8. *They have known that I came out from thee, and have believed that thou didst send me.* If you be gathered to *Shiloh*, then you esteem honourably of him, as he is the glorious *Shiloh*, the Sent of God. Is Christ thus precious to you, and honourable ?

(4.) If you be gathered unto *Shiloh*, then you will be clothed with him, for he is sent to be a Robe of Righteousness ; and all that are gathered to him, do put on that Mantle, and gather in under that Cover, and in that Clothing do they stand perfectly Righteous in the Sight of God ; being accepted as Righteous in his Sight, only for the Righteousness of Christ. Hence, it is given as a Mark of the true Church and Children of God, that are gathered to Christ, that they are clothed with the Sun, *Rev.* xii. 1. It is indeed called a great Wonder, for the Mystery of free

and perfect Justification, and of being clothed with a perfect Righteousness is such a Mystery, that natural Men cannot conceive it, nor believe it, tho' a Man should declare it to them, as the Apostle speaks, *Acts* xiii. 41. Yea, the Believer himself cannot believe it, without holy Wondering, and joyful Trembling, *Fer.* xxxiii. 8, 9. This Wonder is said to be of a Woman in Heaven, that is the Church-Militant, and every particular Believer under a Gospel-Dispensation, wherein there is a full Revelation of his Righteousness. Now, here it is said also, she was clothed with the Sun, that is, with Christ the Sun of Righteousness; the Woman being married to Christ, as the Lord her Righteousness, she is as it were gathered in to the Sun in the Firmament, and so clothed with the perfect Righteousness of Christ; that however black and dark she is in her self, yet, in Point of Justification, this Sun, wherewith she is clothed, makes her shine in a perfect Righteousness, as gloriously in God's Eyes, as the bodily Sun shines gloriously in our Eyes, when it shines in its meridian Splendor. The Believer is not only fair as the Moon, in the Sight of Men, in Point of Sanctification; which Moon, may be indeed, and is full of Spots, and very changeable; But clear as the Sun, in the Sight of God, in Point of Justification; the Sun of Righteousness, with which he is clothed, being perfectly glorious. *Quest.* But, if this be a Mark of One that is gathered, that he is clothed with the Sun of Righteousness; how shall I examine my self by this, or know that I am thus clothed? Why, you may examine it by what follows. If you be clothed with the Sun, then you have got the Moon under your Feet, and upon your Head a Crown of twelve Stars. Have you got the Moon under your Feet? What is that? I find some understand two Things by it; the One is the Moon of your own Righteousness, and the Other is the Moon of the World. As to the former then, if you be gathered to Christ, and clothed with the Sun of Righteousness, then you have got the Moon of your own Righteousness.

Righteousness under your Feet ; That is, you'll make no Account of your own Righteousness, of Sanctification before God, in Comparison of the Garment of Christ's Righteousness, which is the Sun, that you're so gloriously clothed with. Nay, when your own Righteousness or Graces put in for any Share of Justification before God, you'll, in this Respect, trample them under your Feet as a menstruous Cloth, as the Prophet *Isaiah* did, *Isa. lxiv. 6. All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags.* Yea, when it claims to be a Righteousness, before an infinitely holy and just God, you'll trample it under your Feet as Dung, as the Apostle *Paul* did, *Phil. iii. 8. Yea doubtless, I count all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ ; yea, I do count them but Dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness, that is after the Law, but that which is thro' Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith.* This he speaks not only of his Pharisaical Righteousness before his Conversion, but his Righteousness of Sanctification after his Conversion. The Man that is clothed with the Sun of Righteousness, accounts his own Righteousness a contemptible Nothing, in Comparison of Christ's Righteousness. It is not Gain, but Loss, because, as *Chrysostome*, one of the Fathers, says, *When the Sun shines, it is but Loss to sit by a Candle-light ;* Why, because his Righteousness is God's Righteousness. God is the Worker of it ; and, in Comparison thereof our best Righteousness, whereof we are the Workers, even with Divine Assistance, is but Dung to be trampled upon, when it competes with the Other, or would have any Share in the Matter of our Justification before God. If you be clothed with the Sun then, and be thus gathered to *Shiloh*, you have got this Moon under your Feet ; and whatever Light of Sanctification you have, it will flow from your Justification, as the Light of the Moon does come from the Sun ; and as the Moon gives Light in the dark Night, so will the Moon of your Sanctification give Light

to other Men, walking in the dark Night of this World : Your Light will so shine before Men, that they seeing your good Works, may glorify God. And there is a Mystery in the Believer's Life ; he shines like the Moon, in Point of Sanctification, doing all the good Works he can, that he may glorify God, and edify his Neighbour in the World ; and yet he keeps this Moon of his own Works and Righteousness under his Feet, and tramples upon it, in the Matter of Justification, because, in that Respect, his only clothing is the Sun of Righteousness. Again, as to the other Sense, if you be clothed with the Sun, and gathered to *Shiloh*, then you'll have the Moon of this World under your Feet ; the Profits, Honours and Pleasures of the World, which being changeable and unconstant as the Moon, the Believer hath it under his Feet ; because, being clothed with the glorious Sun of Righteousness, and thereby discerning the Glory of God and Christ, and heavenly Things, he cannot but despise and undervalue all earthly Things, when coming in Competition with heavenly ; as *Moses* did, *Heb. xi. 25, 26.* when he vilified all the Glory and Grandeur of *Pharaoh's* Court, &c. You that had never the Moon of this World under your Feet, but have the World in your Heart, and nothing but the World, surely you are not gathered unto *Shiloh* ; for they that are gathered to him, they are gathered out of the World, and set apart from the rest of the World ; they are not of the World, but chosen out of the World. Hence they that are gathered to *Shiloh*, are brought off from their old worldly Companions : There are sinful Gatherings, wicked Clubs and Cabals, that will be hateful to them ; of which, their Heart will say, as *Jacob* said of *Simeon* and *Levi*, *Gen. xlix. 6.* *O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret, to their Assembly mine Honour, be thou not united ;* and with *David*, *Psal. xxvi. 9.* *Gather not my Soul with Sinners.* If you belong to these drunken, tippling, idle and debauched Gatherings ; you may be sure, that you are not gathered

thered unto *Shiloh*. The Godly may indeed fall into such Company, but it is not their Element to embrace their Society: Nay, Fellowship with the Saints, the excellent Ones of the Earth, is their Delight; and Fellowship with the Wicked, is so far from being their Delight, that their Society is rather a Burden, and brings them to a *Wo is me, wo is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, &c. I had rather be a Door keeper, &c.* Now see to it, if you be not gathered out of the World, you're not yet gathered to *Shiloh*: For, if you be clothed with the Sun, then you have the Moon of this World under your Feet, and upon your Head a Crown of twelve Stars: That is, the Doctrine of the Gospel, delivered by the twelve Apostles, and preached by Gospel-ministers, which are called Stars in his right Hand, will be your Crown, a golden Crown to you. Yea, his Word will be to you, as more to be desired than Gold; yea, than much fine Gold. And this leads me to another Mark of those that are gathered to *Shiloh*.

(5.) If you be gathered to *Shiloh*, then gathering Means and Ordinances will be always desirable to you; for they that are gathered, will be always a gathering to him, till they be for ever with him, in the full and immediate Enjoyment of him; Now try your self by this Mark. I enlarge a little upon each, because I design not to multiply Particulars. If you be gathered to *Shiloh*, then the gathering Means will be desirable to you: Now, what Conscience do you make of the Means? For there is a Generation, that boldly say, they have Religion, yet they use not duly, either publick, private, or secret Means. If ever you be gathered to Christ, all the gathering Means, all his Ordinances will be sweet to you; you will seek him where he is to be found, not only in the City, about the Streets and Broad-ways, among the Watch men, but a little further, *Song iii. 2, 3, 4.* They that never used Means, were never gathered; they that are gathered, are ay endeavouring to improve them, because they are

ay gathering to him; therefore try your selves here further, on this Score, and see where you are, in *Shiloh*, or not. If you be gathered to *Shiloh*, you will be ay gathering to him, and living on him; for such are not of those that draw back to Perdition, but of those that believe, to the saving of their Souls. They that go out from him, were never of him; therefore says Christ to his Disciples, *Will ye also go away?* *John* vi. 67. To which the true Believer's Answer is, *Lord, To whom shall we go, thou hast the Words of eternal Life?* *v.* 68. Let me therefore ask you, whether or not you mind to bide with Christ? Surely, if you be gathered to him, you resolve thro' Grace, to bide with him, and to be still coming to him, *1 Pet.* ii. 4. and *as new born Babes, desiring the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.* Indeed, they that abide with Christ cannot but grow; and this I say, to find out Hypocrites, that (it may be) use the outward Means, and resolve, in their Fashion, they will abide with Christ; That is, they will not turn Papists or Malignants, turn who will, and yet know not what it is to be ay gathering to, and growing in the Lord Jesus. I know that Saints have their Winter-blasts, that set them back, but they have also their Summer blinks, to set them forward again, and make them grow in Knowledge, Faith, Love, and Experience; or else, for want of this Growth, they are always quarreling themselves: But, for other Professors, that never were rooted in Christ, they keep ay their old Stanse. Men would blush for Shame, to have it said to them, they are as foolish this Day, as they were this Day twenty Years; or, that they are as bad in their Callings, and as ill at their Trade, as when they began; and yet, in Christianity, many are as ill as they were thirty, forty, fifty Years since, as ignorant of Christ and the Gospel, as great Strangers to Communion with God in Christ. Surely, they that are gathered to Christ, they will strive to win forward, they cannot get enough of him, but press toward the Mark; They that

ward the Mark. They that have got enough of Christ, have got nothing as yet ; and they that have got him, they may think they have got nothing ; for what they have got, is nothing to what they see to be in him, and therefore they press forward, whenever they are themselves. And indeed, when you are not going forward, you're going backward. When a Man rows against the Stream, he holds up the Boat ; but let him lay aside the Oars, he will go further down than he came up. Hence, gathered Souls are ay for making use of the Oars of gathering Means, that they may win forward : And hence as God's gathering Means will be delightful, so the Devil's scattering Means will be hateful to him that is gathered ; every Thing that tends to make a Separation betwixt Christ and him, will be uneasy, especially when he hath come any Speed at Ordinances : O to think of a Separation again, will be sad and sorrowful ! Wo is me, that I am going back to a World of Sin, and Sinners, and Temptations again ! Being gathered to him, he cannot think of being sundered from him.

(6.) If you be gathered to *Shiloh*, then it will be your Desire and Endeavour to gather Others to him ; the Soul that comes to Christ, will seek to draw Others after him, *John i. 45, 46.* Whenever Christ found *Philip*, *Philip* found *Nathaniel*, and says, *We have found the Messias, O come and see him ; John iv. 29.* When Christ manifested himself to the Woman of *Samarita*, she invites the Men of the City to come to him, *O come see a Man, that told me all Things that ever I did.* Never a Soul was gathered to Christ, but desired to gather Others, especially its Friends and Relations. The Parent that is in Christ, will be careful to gather his Children to Christ, the Master his Servant, *Gen. xviii. 19.* *I know*, lays God of *Abraham*, *That he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the Lord.* It is not possible, but that Soul that comes to Christ, and hath gotten a Draught of his free Love, if it could command ten thousand, it would command them to

come to Christ. If you never had a Care or Concern this Way, to make these in your Family to know the Lord, you declare you was never gathered to him. But, you whose Soul's Desire is, to gather Others to Christ, you may be sure, concerning your self, that you're gathered to *Shiloh*. Now, If you try your selves impartially by these Marks, you may come to find whether you have been gathered to *Shiloh*, yea or not.

Second Sort then, that I would speak to, are some that may be sure, that they were never gathered to *Shiloh*; and it is to be feared, that Unbelievers make up the greatest Part of this Assembly: And therefore I must be allowed to speak, especially to them; and if Believers themselves give Ear, and the Lord concur with the Word of general Exhortation, they may get a new Grip of *Shiloh*, by the By. My Exhortation to the People in general, then, especially those that were never gathered unto Christ, is in the Words of the Prophet, *Zeph. ii. 1. Gather your selves together, yea, gather together, O Nation not desired; That is, either not desiring, even you that have no Desire towards God and Christ, and his Grace and Favour, but are very indifferent about it; or Nation not desirable, having nothing lovely or amiable about you, to recommend you to God: Yet, O gather together, before the Decree bring forth, and before the fierce Anger of the Lord come upon you; for if once his Wrath begin to burn, blessed are all they that trust in him, and gather to him. Also, in the Words of the Prophet, Isa. xlv. 20, 22. Assemble your selves, and come; Why, what is that? It follows, Look to me, and be saved, all the Ends of the Earth; for I am God, and there is none else. Shiloh is come, and he is come for the Salvation of the People. O let all the People say Amen, even so come Lord Jesus: Here is the Feast of fat Things, that the Lord of Hosts hath made on this Mountain, for all People. Isa. xxv. 6. Therefore let all the People assemble themselves and come, that they may eat and drink. I allude to Ezek. xxxix. 17. where God speaks to every feathered Fowl, and every Beast*
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of the Field, laying, *Assemble your selves and come, gather your selves one every Side to my Sacrifice, &c. that you may eat Flesh, and drink Blood.* Indeed, except you eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of God, you have no Life in you, *John vi. 53.* Therefore assemble your selves and come, gather to this great Sacrifice upon the Mountains of *Israel* for you; a Sacrifice of a sweet-smelling Savour to God. Here is the Carcase, O let the Eagles be gathered together. We must preach this Gospel to every Creature, every rational Creature; yea, to Men that have lost their Reason, and turned to Beasts: Every Beast of the Field, tame or wild, clean, or unclean, *Acts x. 12.* What means the Opening of the Heavens there, and the descending of the Sheet, the great Sheet knit at four Corners, containing all Manner of wild Beasts, and creeping Things, and Fowls of the Air? Why, the Meaning was, Go call all, and every One of the People. The Gentiles, some of them are creeping in the Dust, and wallowing in the Mire of sinful Lusts and Worldly Mindedness; others are flying in the Air of Pride, Vanity and Selfishness: But, go you and call all the poor sinful Creatures within your Reach, whether they be creeping on the Earth, or flying in the Air; all the sinful House of *Adam* are made up of such a Sort of People; but go, and tell them, that now *Shiloh* is come, and *To him must the gathering of the People be.* Therefore, in the Name of the great *Shiloh*, and in his Father's Name, we invite and exhort all the People, that have hitherto been gathering to the Devil, and gathering to their Lusts, and gathering to the World, and gathering to their idle Cabals, and drunken Gossipings, sinful Diversions, and damnable Debaucheries, now to think in earnest of gathering unto *Shiloh*; for, *Shiloh* is come, and let the gathering of the People be to him. Now, seeing nothing but Divine Almighty Power can gather Souls unto Christ; therefore, O Man, Woman, Lass, Lad, look to God for Power to accompany the Call; for the Gospel call uses to be the Channel, in which Divine Power runs, for conquering Souls. And be-

cause, I know not, but this Power may accompany this Call for making out the Promise in the Text, that *to him shall the gathering of the People be*: Therefore, I shall offer some Considerations, for pressing home this Exhortation upon the People.

First, Consider that *Shiloh* is come to the People, that the People may come to him; for this is what I mean, by gathering to him, namely, a Coming to him by Faith: And this Faith, you know, is a Receiving and Resting upon him for Salvation, as he is offered to you in the Gospel. Now, since he cannot be received, but in and by the Gospel-Offer, the Word of Grace, the Word of Promise in the Gospel: Therefore, to receive him, is to believe in him, *John i. 12.* As it is by Unbelief that we depart from him, *Heb. iii. 12.* *Take heed Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God*: So it is by believing in him that we gather to him, and to believe in him, is to credit the Record that God hath given of his Son; and this is the Record, that God hath given us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son; *He that does not thus believe, hath made God a Liar, 1 John v. 10, 11.* To come to him by Faith then, is to close with him in the Gospel-Record, and upon the Divine Testimony; to have a Divine Persuasion of the Truth and Goodness of the Gospel-Messsage, with particular Application to your self, saying, *O here is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Jesus Christ came to save Sinners, of whom I am the Chief, 1 Tim. i. 15.* and so it is just a Taking him at his Word, and taking his Word of Grace, his Word of Honour for your Salvation, according to the Gospel-Offer of him. If you be saying then, that you cannot come to him by Faith, it may be very true, for indeed you cannot come, till he draw you, *John vi. 44.* You cannot believe, till the Spirit of Faith mix in with this Word of Grace; but do you know what you're saying, when you say you cannot come to him by Faith, tho' the Word of Grace came to you in particular, to be believed by you? You are

are saying, in Effect, that God is a Liar, I cannot take his Word for it, I cannot believe that he is speaking to me, or that he means any Good to me. *To you is the Word of this Salvation sent*, says the Gospel; No, says Unbelief, *never a Word of that is true, with Respect to me: Let them apply it to whom it is sent, but I cannot think it is to the like of me.* Wretch, you are calling the God of Truth a Liar: O Blasphemy! If it were not to you, your Unbelief would not be your Sin; but of all Sins it is the most damning, as well as the prolifick Womb that genders others Sins. However, *Shiloh* is come to you, that you may come to him; he came to his own, and his own, *to wit*, the *Jews*, received him not; intimating, that the Design of the Work, and Design of his Coming, was that they might come to him, receive him, and gather to him: And now he is come to you Gentiles, he is come to the People, and shall the People reject him too: He is come to us in the Flesh, by taking on our Nature; he is come to us in the Gospel, the Gospel-Offer, the Gospel-Call, the Gospel-Promise, the Gospel-Invitation; and tho' he should never come any other Way, yet it states your Obligation, and lays a Foundation for your coming to him; and if you reject him, you are as inexcusable, as the *Jews* that rejected him were.

2dly, Consider whom it is you will be gathered to, when gathered unto *Shiloh*; surely they that know his Name will put their Trust in him, and so gather to him, *Psal. xxiv. 9, 10. Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, that the King of Glory may come in*: O, who would not cast open the Gates of their Hearts to receive such an honourable Guest! O, if you knew what a glorious One Christ is, you could not find in your Heart to reject and despise him: He is not a Man simply, or an Angel, but a God-Man, the Lord of Men and Angels. It is not possible to tell what Glory is in him, for God is in him. *Great is the Mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the Flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. A Godhead dwelling in our Flesh is the World's Wonder: It is such a Mystery, that the World cannot receive it; but

but this is the Gospel that we preach, *2 Cor. v. 19.* *That God is in Christ, reconciling the World to himself:* O think, what of God is in Christ! (1.) the Authority of God is in him, *Exod. xxiii. 21. My Name is in him;* this is his proper Name, *Shiloh*, the Sent, Authorised, and Sealed of the Father, *John vi. 27.* He came in his Father's Name, as well as his own, to seek and save lost Sinners. As the Authority of God, so, (2.) The Wisdom and Power of God is in him, *1 Cor. i. 24. We preach Christ crucified, &c. the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God;* all the Treasures of Divine Wisdom, and all the Magazine of Divine Power are in him: And not only so, but again, (3.) The Spirit of God is in him, *Isa. lxii. 1. I have put my Spirit upon him, that he may bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles.* He hath not only the Spirit of Wisdom to contrive for the best, and the Spirit of Power to save to the uttermost, but also the Spirit of all Grace to confer upon the People; and shall not the Gathering of the People be to him? O, What of God is in him! (4.) The Righteousness of God is in him, and his Righteousness is the Righteousness of God, which is revealed to you in this Gospel, from Faith to Faith, *Rom. i. 17.* (5.) The Love of God is in him, for Divine Love is wrapt up in this Garment of Flesh and Blood, *1 John iv. 9. In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him.* (6.) The Mercy of God is in him. O poor Sinner, when you come to the last Gasps, readily God's Mercy will be your Cry; but in vain will you seek God's Mercy, to the Prejudice of God's Justice; and behold, Justice and Mercy meet together, and kiss one another, only in Christ: Mercy will vent no otherwise, but in Christ, in whom alone God is well pleased, and by whom his Justice is satisfied. What shall I say? (7.) The Salvation of God is in him, *Acts iv. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no Name given under Heaven, &c. Yea,* (8.) The Fulness of God is in him, *Col. i. 19. For it hath pleased the Father, that in*
him

should run over, that so his Cup of Judgments may run over also ; for a Cloud of Wickedness is gathering more and more. (2.) Clouds of *Error* are gathering also ; a black Cloud especially of *Arianism*, which threatens the Destruction of the very Foundation of Christianity ; And if the Foundations be destroyed, what shall the Righteous do ? Of this I spoke formerly ; therefore I shall only say, When these Clouds of Wickedness and Error are gathering to a prodigious Blackness of Darkness, it is Time for us to be gathering to *Shiloh*, who is the Way and the Truth ; the Way to walk in, in Opposition to the Way of Wickedness ; and the Truth to be believed, in Opposition to all the Paths of Error. But moreover, these black Clouds bode more a-coming. (3.) There is a Cloud of *Wrath* gathering over *Britain* ; a Cloud of Judgment and Calamity is gathering over *Scotland*, and hath been gathering these many Years bygone, especially since the Time that *Scotland* was incorporate with her Neighbour : A Cloud of Wrath hath been gathering over us, both as a Church and Nation ; What Drops have fallen out of that Cloud to the Rending and Dividing of our Church, and to the sinking and impoverishing of our State ; what Clouds of Disorder and Confusion are hovering over our Head, is too well known : Yea, a Piece of the Cloud is already broken about *Glasgow* within this Fortnight ; but the Lord knows what will be the End of these Things, more dreadful Showers of temporal Judgments are in all Appearance hastening on : And O, is it not Time to be gathering in to *Shiloh*, the only Place of Soul-safety ? They that are in him have the Lee side of the Bush, whatever Way the Wind blow. But tho' you should escape the Cloud of national Judgments, yet there is a Cloud of personal Affliction gathering, be it Sickness on your Body or the like : Is it not best to be under Covert before the Shower come on ? Or, if you should escape that, yet, (4.) Certainly there is a Cloud of *Death* gathering and coming upon you, as fast as Days, and Hours, and Moments flee away ; and if your Bodies be gathered

gathered to the Grave before your Souls be gathered to *Shiloh*, you'll be miserable as long as God shall be blessed, that is for ever and ever. You may make a Shift to live as merrily as you can now; but, *What will you do in the Day of Visitation?* Isa. x. 3. What will you do when the King of Terrors is gathering his Forces against you, and when you shall be gathered before God's awful Tribunal? &c.

5thly, Consider how long he hath been offering to gather you. And how oft, O Sinner, would he have gathered you, as a Hen does her Chickens under her Wings, but ye would not? How long? Even all Day long, *Rom. x. last. All Day long have I stretched forth my Hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying People.* God hath been stretching out his Arm to get a Grip of you, even the Arm of his Grace in the Gospel-offer and Invitation, and you're not gripped to this Day. All the Day long that the Gospel-sun hath been shining have I been stretching out my Arms, says God; for God counts the Time how long he waits upon you, he reckons up the Time how long you let him stand knocking at the Door of your Heart: He counts every Hour's Refusal, and every Year's Refusal, tho' it be Forty Years; *Forty Years long was I grieved with this Generation.* God hath been calling on some of you Ten, Twenty, Thirty, Forty Years, and, it may be, to gray Hairs, but he counts the Time how long: He hath been chasing you with his Grace, while you have been but chasing Feathers in the Wind, delighting your selves in nothing but Vanity, yea lying Vaniry, forsaking your own Mercy; as Persons that have neither Care for Heaven, nor a Fear for Hell. What if the Time be now come, wherein he is saying, *I'll wait no longer: Ephraim is joined to his Idols, let him alone;* If this very Call be slighted, my Spirit shall strive no more with you; I have long sought your Kindness, and you refused it; I offered my Kindness, and you thought nothing of it; *I would have gathered you, and you would not?* The Cause of your Damnation then, if you perish, is not

in God, but in you, it is not in his Act of Reprobation, but in your Act of Rebellion and wicked Will. You're a gainsaying and rebellious People against the God that stretched forth his Hands towards you : Say not then, What ails God at me ? But rather, What ails your wicked Nature at God ? O may conquering Grace at length come ! But again,

6thly, Consider what Relation Christ stands in to the People, that the Gathering of the People may be to him : Not only is *Shiloh* come in our Nature, but he is come in the Capacity of a *Shiloh*, that is, the *Sent. of God*, under such manifold Relations to the People, as may engage the Hearts of the People. Since the Text makes him the *Sent of God*, let us see what he is sent for, and whether the People have any Concern. He is sent to be the Saviour of the People, *Luke ii. 11. To you is born in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the World, Joh. iv. 42.* Is he sent to be the Saviour of the People ; and shall not the Gathering of the People be to him ? He is sent to be the Deliverer of the People, *Rom. xi. 29. There is come out of Zion the Deliverer, that shall turn away Ungodliness from Jacob.* O shall he come to deliver the People, and none of the People come to be delivered by him ? He is sent to be the Helper of the People ; yea, all the Help of the People is laid upon him, *Psal. lxxxix. 19. I have laid Help upon One that is Mighty ; O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thy Help.* Is he the Helper of the People, and the Help it self ; and shall not the People come to him, to seek his Help, and take his Help ? He is sent to be the Prophet of the People, *Isa. l. 4. The Lord hath given him the Tongue of the Learned, to speak a Word in Season to the Weary.* He is the only powerful Preacher and Teacher of the People ; never Man spake like this Man : And should not the People hear him ? *This is my beloved Son, &c. hear ye him.* He is sent to be the Priest, and the Sacrifice of the People, *Eph. v. 2. As he is*

a Priest for ever, for he gave himself to be an Offering, and a Sacrifice of a sweet smelling Savour unto God; and all was, that the People may gather under the Covert of the Blood of the Sacrifice. Again, He is sent to be the King of the People. *Psal. ii. 6. I have set my King upon my holy Hill of Zion.* Shall he have no Subjects for your Part? &c. He is sent to be the Friend and Favourer of the People; hence called, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners; not a Friend to their Sins, but such a Friend to their Souls, as to save them from their Sins. He is sent to be the Justifier of the People, the Justifier of them that believe in Jesus: Yea, hence he is said to justify the Ungodly, for he came not to be a Condemner, but a Justifier, *John iii. 17. God sent not his Son to the World, to condemn the World, but that the World thro' him might be saved.* O shall not guilty People come to him to be justified from all Things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses? He is sent, *1 Pet. ii. last,* to be the Shepherd and Bishop of the People, that the People may return unto him, as the Shepherd and Bishop of their Souls. He is sent to be the Physician of the People; hence, his Name is *Jehovah-Rophi*, the Lord hath healed thee: And as many as touched him were healed. *The Whole need not the Physician but they that are sick.* And who are they that need not this Healing? Therefore let the Gathering of the People that need Healing be to him. He is sent to be the Witness, the Leader and Commander of the People, *Isa. lv. 5. Behold, I have given him for a Witness a Leader and Commander of the People;* and all that the Gathering of the People may be to him. He is sent to be a Counsellor, a Father, and a Prince of the People, *Isa. ix. 6. To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulders.* He is sent to be the Builder of the People, and the Foundation-stone, upon which the People should build, *Zech. vi. 13. Even he shall build the Temple* of

of the Lord, and he shall bear the Glory. Isa. xxviii. 16. Behold I lay in Zion, for a Foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Corner-stone, a sure Foundation; and all that the Gathering of the People may be to him. He is sent to be the Blessor of the People, that the People may gather to him for a Blessing, Acts iii. last. God having raised up his Son Jesus, hath sent him to bless you, in turning away every One of you from his Iniquities. He hath sent him to bless the People; and God's Blessing will light on all them that gather to him for a Blessing: Men shall be blest in him, and all Nations shall call him blessed. He is sent to be the standard-bearer of the People, Song. v. 10. He is the Chief, the Standard-bearer amongst ten thousand. Hence he is called the Ensign of the People, and to it shall the Gentiles seek, Isa. xi. 10. Ought not then the Gathering of the People be to their Standard-bearer and Ensign? He is sent to be the Burden-bearer of the People; behold, the Burden of your Sins is laid upon him, Isa. liii. 6, 8. The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all, or made them to meet on him. He hath gathered together all the Sins of the People, and laid them on his Back, that the Gathering of the People may be to him, as the Lamb of God, that takes away the Sins of the World. As the Burden of our Sins, so the Burden of our Sorrows is laid upon him, Isa. liii. 5. Surely he hath born our Griefs and carried our Sorrows: The Burden of our Wounds and Bruises and Stripes was laid upon him; v. 5. He was wounded for our Sins, and bruised for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our Peace was laid upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed. All the Wounds that we should have got with the Sword of God's Wrath, and all the Stripes that should have been laid upon our Back to Eternity, were gathered together, and laid upon Christ's Back. And why was the Burden of all the Sins and Sorrows of the People laid upon him, but that the Gathering of the People might be to him, as the Burden bearer of the People? What shall I say? He is sent, not only to be all Relations, but all Things

Things to the People. He is sent to be the the Covenant of the People, *Isa* xlii. 6. *I'll give thee for a Covenant of the People.* He is sent to be the Glory of the People ; a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of his People *Israel*. He is sent to be the Hope of the People ; *He is our Hope*, says the Apostle ; and, *The Lord shall be the Hope of his People*, *Joel* iii. 16. He is sent to be the Desire of the People ; therefore it is said of him, The Desire of all Nations shall come. He is sent to be the Propitiation of the People, *1 John* ii. 2. He is sent to be the Salvation and Consolation of the People : *Behold thy Salvation comes* ; and he is called the Consolation of *Israel*. He is sent to be the Door of the People ; *I am the Door*, &c. Again, He is sent to be the Way of the People ; *I am the Way* ; *no Man comes to the Father, but by me*. He is sent to be the Leader of the People ; he is the true *Jacob's Ladder*, that reaches from Earth to Heaven, by which alone we can climb up to *Glory*. And, O should not the Gathering of the People be to him ? And because they cannot of themselves enter in at this Door, nor walk in this Way, nor climb this Ladder, therefore he is sent to be the Leader of the People ; I'll lead the Blind in a Way they know not, and in Paths that they have not known : Yea, and to be the Strength of the People, that the People may gather to him, and trust in the Lord *Jehovah*, in whom there is everlasting Strength. He is sent to be the Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption of the People, *1 Cor.* i. 30. He is made of God unto us, all these Things ; even he who is the Lord our Righteousness. And, that he might be a perfect Law-biding Righteousness of the People, behold with Wonder, also he sent him to be the Sin of the People, and the Curse of the People, *2 Cor.* v. last. *He hath made him to be Sin for us, that we might be the Righteousness of God in him.* *Gal.* iii. 13. *To redeem us from the Curse of the Law, he was made a Curse for us.* What shall I say ? He is the Redeemer of the People, the Surety of the People, and the

the Advocate of the People, the Ransom of the People. *Shiloh* is come, and he is sent of God, to be all Relations, and all things to the People, that the Gathering of the People may be to him. God hath put all the Privileges of the People into his Hands, that he may be the Light and Life of the People, who is therefore called; the Light of the World, and the Life of the World. He hath put all Gifts, and Graces, and Fulness in his Hand, for the Peoples Use and Behoof: He hath received Gifts for Men, even for the Rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them. And is there nothing in all this to be a Motive or Argument for gathering the People unto him? Is he sent for all these Ends to the People, and shall not the People be gathered to him? O may the People come to him, who is the All of the People!

7thly, Consider what House-room there is in him, for the People to gather unto: And, (1.) He is a hiding House for the People to gather to, *Isa. xxxii. 2.* A Man shall be a hiding Place from the Storm, and a Covert from the Tempest, &c. Behold he is a hiding House, a Shelter House, a Refuge for the People, a Sanctuary for the People, that the People may flee to him, saying with the Psalmist, *I flee to thee to hide me.* (2.) He is a Dwelling-House for the People to gather to, *Psal. xci. 1.* *He that dwells in the secret Place of the most High, shall abide under the Shadow of the Almighty:* And O they that dwell in him, they dwell on high, and the Place of their Defence is the Munition of Rocks. They that are once gathered to him, he and they do mutually inhabit one another, in the Communion of the Holy Ghost, 1 *John iv. 13.* *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, by his Spirit which he hath given us.* (3.) He is a working House for the Gathering of the People to; not one spiritually good Work can be performed out of him, for without him we can do nothing, *John xv. 5.* But when One gets in to this House, then he is like a Man in his working House, that hath all his working Instruments and Tools at his Hand, with-

without which he could not work at his Trade: Yea, then he hath Christ himself for his working Hand; I can do all Things through Christ strengthening me. He performs all my Work for me, his Strength being made perfect in my Weakness. (4.) He is the Bathing-House for the Gathering of the People to, 1 John i. 7. *The Blood of Christ cleanseth from all Sin; If I wash thee not, thou hast no Part in me*: He himself is the Fountain open to the House of David for Sin and for Uncleanneſs; Here alone it is, that the filthy leprous People can get their Souls bathed and purged, and muſt gather to him for that End, ſaying, *Purge me with Hyſſop, &c.* 5.) He is the Treasuſe-Houſe for the People to gather unto. Where muſt the Gathering of the People be, but to the only Store-Houſe? Poor People may be here ſupplied, out of his unſearchable Riches, for *in him are hid all the Treasures of Wiſdom and Knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. It hath pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all Fulneſs dwell, that out of his Fulneſs we might receive Grace for Grace. (6.) He is the Pleaſure-Houſe for the Gathering of the People unto. He is a Pleaſure-Houſe both for God and for the People of God; ſuch a Pleaſure-houſe for God to dwell in, that as God is well pleaſed in him, reconciled and ſatiſfied in him, in whom his Soul delights, ſo he is infinitely well pleaſed with all that gather in to him, they are accepted in him, and that with Pleaſure. *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed*: And when once Sinners are gathered in to him, O they are well pleaſed alſo: yea, abundantly ſatiſfied with the Fatneſs of his Houſe, Pſal. xxxvi. 8. *In whom believing, we rejoice with Joy unſpeakable, &c.* In his Preſence there is Fulneſs of Joy. There is no Houſe of Pleaſure in the World like this. (7.) He is the Magazine-Houſe for the Gathering of the People to. All our Magazines for Military Proviſion are in him. He indeed is like the Tower of David, built for an Armory, where there hangs a Thouſand Bucklers, all Shields of mighty Men, Song iv. 4. for all the Believers

liever's Spiritual Armour, whereby he must fight against the Devil, the World and the Flesh, is hanging in this House ; and therefore, whenever he is for fighting, he is to put on the whole Armour of God, and to be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might : Never will a Soul get a happy Stroke given to the Devil, or Corruption, without Armour got out of this Magazine-House. Here lies all the Powder and Ammunition, whereby the most subtle Engines of Hell may be b'own up, and broken. (8.) He is the Banqueting House for the Gathering of the People to, *Song ii. 4. He brought me to the Banqueting-House, and his Banner over me was Love.* It is remarkable and strange, that there should be Need of a Banner in a Banqueting-House. A Banner is for War ; and indeed his People, when they are fed in his House, they are fitted for War : But, O a Banner of Love is good Provision for War ; the Manifestation of the Love of God in Christ heartens and strengthens the Soul, both for Work and Warfare. He fights best when he feeds best upon the Love and Favour of God, in Christ, who himself is both the Banqueting-House, the Banner, and the Feast ; he is the Food, his Flesh is Meat indeed, &c. There he feeds them with his Pardon and Peace, he feeds them with his Righteousness and Fulness ; yea, there he sups with them, and they with him : And this Feast of fat Things is provided for all People, *Isa. xxv. 6.* that they may gather in to the Banqueting-House. He only is the Viſual-House, the true *Bethlehem*, the House of Bread. (9.) He is the Praying-House, for the gathering of the People to ; the true Temple and House of Prayer for all People, *Isa. lvi. 7.* Would you have a House for praying acceptably in, so as to be ay. heard and answered, whenever you pray ? Here it is, there is no House of Prayer like it ; and whenever you go, be it to a Corner or Cloſet, this House is at Hand for you to run in to, that you may be accepted in the Beloved ; and when you go in to this House of Prayer, you shall have whatever you ask, that the Father may be glorified

risied in the Son, *John* xiv. 13. (10.) He is the Praising House for the Gathering of the People to, *Psal.* lxxxiv.

4. *Blessed are they that dwell in thy House, they will be still praising thee.* And indeed the farther you go into the House of Prayer ; the more will you find it to be the House of Praise. Much Praise, and Honour and Glory in the highest, does God get in this House ; Whereas, People, out of this House, do nothing but dishonour and affront him. But, O may all the People praise him, by gathering in to this House ! O what notable Housing is there here for the People ! therefore let the Gathering of the People be to him. In a Word, he is the Meeting-House with God, *There will I meet with thee, even on the Mercy-Seat, between the Cherubims,* *Exod.* xxv. 22. Here is House-Room for all the People. There is a Sign hung up over the Door of the House, with this Inscription, *Whosoever will, let him come,* *Rev.* xxii. 17.

8thly, Consider there is a Gathering Place for the People in the Lord Jesus, with a *What tho'* written below the Inscription. (1.) *What tho'* you have never come in to this Day, yet now you are welcome to come in, tho' you have been standing without all your Days till now ; it is come to the Eleventh and last Hour, *Matth.* xx. 6. *Why stand ye here all the Day idle?* He calls you in to his Working-House. (2.) *What tho'* you have played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet there is Place in him for your gathering to, *Jer.* iii. 1. *Yet return again unto me, saith the Lord ; yea,* *Isa.* i. 18. *Tho' your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow, tho' they be red as Crimson, they shall be white as Wool.* Have you been a Drunkard, &c. why, *such were some of you, &c.* read *1 Cor.* vi. 9, 10, 11. (3.) *What tho'* you have been untoward, and untractable hitherto, yet there is Place in him for your gathering to, *Isa.* lvii. 17. *For the Iniquity of his Covetousness was I wroth, and smote him ; I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the Way of his own Heart ; yet I have seen his Ways, and will heal him.* (4.) *What tho'* you have been making God to serve with your Sins,

Sins, and wearying him with your Iniquity, yet there is Place in him for your gathering to him ; for behold what he says, even with Respect unto such, *Isa. xliii. 25. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thine Iniquity, &c. Put me in Remembrance.* (5.) What tho' you have been guilty of the most provoking and grievous Backsliding, yet there is Place in him for you gathering unto, *Jer. iii. 14, 22. Return ye Backsliding Children, for I will heal your Backsliding ; yea, I'll heal your Backslidings, and love you freely.* (6.) What tho' your outward Circumstances in the World be never so mean and contemptible, so as no Body cares for you, more than the Dirt of the Street, and you are cast out at all Hands ; yet there is Place in him for your gathering to, for he gathers the Outcasts of *Israel*. And *James ii. 5. Hath not God chosen the Poor of this World, to be rich in Faith, and Heirs of a Kingdom ?* (7.) What tho' many have gathered in to *Shiloh* already, yet there is Room enough and Place enough for you to gather in also ; for as it is said in the Parable, *Luke xiv. 22. Tho' many were gathered into the Supper, yet there was Room ; so here, tho' Thousands and Ten thousands have been gathered to Shiloh, since he came, and before he came, yet there is Room, there is Place for you : As he says, In his Father's House are many Mansions ; so say I of Shiloh's House, that there are many Mansions therein, with him there are Multitudes of Mercies for Multitudes of Sinners : O, who can reckon the Multitudes of his tender Mercies ? Who can comprehend the Vastness of his Gathering-Place ? It would hold Thousands of Worlds, let be one World ; therefore let not that stand in the Way of your Gathering unto Shiloh.* (8.) What tho' you could never think that there was any Place in him for you, nor any Mercy for the like of you ; yet nevertheless there is a Gathering-Place in him for you, *Isa. lv. 8. For my Thoughts are not your Thoughts, &c. and, As the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Thoughts higher than your Thoughts. Therefore,* (9.)

What tho' you be unworthy to come to him, yet

there is Place in him for unworthy Sinners to gather into. Are you unworthy of him? Well I wot that is true, as true a Word as ever you spake; but the more unworthy you are, the more welcome to him, who hath Worth enough for you and him both: He expects no Worth to be in you, till once you come to him. What is it that makes you unworthy? Is it, that you are poor, miserable, wretched, blind and naked? Or is it, that you are stupid and senseless, and know not that you are in these dismal Circumstances? Why, he makes that the very Reason of his inviting you to gather in to him; *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and knowest not that thou art wretched, &c.* Rev. iii. 17, 18. *therefore I counsel thee to buy of me Gold.* Unworthy Sinners, gather in to that well-furnished House, where all you need to make you happy and holy is to be had: And say not you are unfit to come; for there you see, that even impotent and unsensible Sinners, whom we are ready to shut out, Grace is ready to take in. Yea, (10.) What tho' you be unable to come to him, and gather in to *Shiloh*, yet there is Place in him for your gathering to him, *Isa.* xl. 29. *For he gives Power to the Faint, and to them that have no Might he increaseth Strength.* If you would be gathered, he stands ready to reach you his Helping Hand, and bids you take Hold of his Strength, that you may make Peace with him, and you shall make Peace with him, *Isa.* xxvii. 3. Yea, what tho' you have been unwilling all your Days till this very Moment, unwilling to be gathered? Yet he who says, How oft would I have gathered you, and you would not? Is now saying, If you would be gathered, I am here, and my Power and Grace is at your Service, for drawing you nearer. Yea, what tho' you find much Unwillingness and Enmity this Moment in your Heart against him; Yet if you would be content that he break your Enmity, and make you willing, O there is place, there is place in him for you to gather in to. Yea, What shall I say? Tho' you be as unwilling as ever you was, and your

your Ill will against him is ready to send you into the burning Lake; yet know, O 'devilish Enemy to God and Christ, he is calling you to come to him, saying, *Whosoever will let him come.* O, will you not be gathered? Why will you die? As I live, I have no Pleasure in your Death; I have infinitely greater Pleasure in your Gathering to *Shiloh*, in whom all my Attributes are glorified and well pleased. And if this Call do at last kinde a secret Wish and Desire in your Soul, saying, O that he would come and gather me! Behold his gathering Arms are stretched out towards you, and you shall be as welcome to him, as ever any Soul was since the World began. Well, is there such a Gathering Place for the People here, such a Gathering-House, with so many *What tho's* written on the Sign of the House; or the Face of the Door, to invite all Passengers, that are travelling to Eternity, to come in, and be happy for ever? And shall there be no Gathering of the People to *Shiloh*? Nay we hope, that Divine Power hath made some to be willing, and that they are either saying, Behold we come to thee, for thou art the Lord our God; or else, Lord, come and draw, come and gather, and get the Glory to thy Name for ever.

Having offered these Motives and Considerations; I should offer next some Directions. It is Divine Power only that does the Business; and therefore, I shall only give you those two Directions in case you would know how to manage, so as you may not be deceived in this Matter. If I could help you to Heaven, I think, I would desire to do it; and, for your Help and Direction, in order to your right gathering to *Shiloh*, I would say to you, (1) Never satisfy your selves with gathering about him and his Ordinances, without gathering to him. Many, like the Multitude in the Gospel, may gather about him, yea, so near as to press upon him, while there was but one poor Woman, that was gathered to him, and touched him. Somebody hath touched me, says Christ: Why, say the Disciples, the Multitude press upon you; and what mean

mean you, Lord, by that, Some-body hath touched me? Nay, but as one of the Fathers said, *Tura premit, fides tangit*; the Multitude preſs, but Faith toucheth. Satisfy not your ſelves then, I ſay, with a Gathering about him, unleſs you be gathered to him: People may gather about a Tree to pluck the Fruit thereof, but it is another Thing to be gathered to it, ſo as either to become a Branch, or have an Intereſt in it; even ſo may ſome People eat of the Fruit of the Tree of Life, in reſpect of common Providence, common Graces, common Influences; but it is another Thing to have an Intereſt in the Tree, and Union to it: So here, &c. O Sirs, ſay you, that is a hard Note, that caſts me all down again. Why, may the Lord himſelf bring down all falſe Refuges: But in caſe it perplex any poor Soul, that hath been ſitting under Chriſt's Shadow at this Occaſion, and his Fruit hath been ſweet to their Taſte, and they may think, that all they got, is but only the Fruit, while they have no Union to or Intereſt in the Tree. *Queſt.* Say you then, How ſhall One know if he only eats of the Fruit, and hath no Intereſt in the Tree? In Answer to which, I'll endeavour to illuſtrate it by this plain Simile; You know, when a Man hath no Intereſt in the Tree of a Garden, if he get the Fruit, he cares not what come of the Tree, tho' the Branches of it were all broken down; He loves the Fruit, and takes it, but the Tree is not his own, he hath no Concern about it: But, the Man that hath an Intereſt in the Tree, tho' he loves the Fruit, yet he loves the Tree better than the Fruit; and therefore, he would rather that People ſhould take all the Fruit away from him, than break and deſtroy the Branches of the Tree; for he eſteems the Tree better than all the Fruit that grows upon it. The Application thereof is eaſy; for, even ſo the Hypocrite that eats of the Fruit of the Tree of Life, as it were, but hath no Intereſt in the Tree; the Fruit, the Frame, the Enlargement, or the like, is all that he wants; the Gifts and common Graces he gets, is what he ſolaceth himſelf withal; he reſts there, and ſits down ſatisfied, without Chriſt himſelf, or any true Love to him,
and

and unfeigned Concern for his Glory and Interest : Self is upmost with him, and therefore he pleases himself with the Fruit, and loves it more than the Tree. But, the true Believer, that is gathered to Christ, he loves the Fruit indeed, and takes Pleasure in the Communication ; but the Tree it self is above all Things to him, and the Fruit he tasted still the more recommends the Tree to him. O Christ's Gifts are sweet, but himself sweetest of all ! The Believer's Frame is like the Frame of a Picture ; he is not taken up with the Frame, but with the Picture that is within the Frame, even Christ, who is the Picture of God, the Image of the invisible God. See, I say, that it be Christ himself, that you are gathered to. (2.) Be still about his Hand, in the Use of appointed Means, but with a constant Eye to Divine Power : Let Means and Ordinances be still used ; For, tho', as they are your Performances, they cannot be profitable, yet, as they are his Ordinance, he may put a Blessing in them. Therefore, be still in the King's High-way, in the Use of Means ; for, tho' the natural Use of Means, and God's saving Grace, have no Connection, yet there is far less a Connection betwixt that Grace, and the Neglect of Means. The poor Beggar, that needs an Alms from the King, goes to the King's High-way, where he passes ; and surely he is nearer his Purpose, than if he should go to the Top of a Mountain, where the King never comes : So, be you still in the Use of Means in the Lord's Way ; but rest not there, lest you be like One, that, upon Pretence of seeking a Treasure on the other Side of a River, should come to the Boat, which is the Mean, and rest there, without going further ; Why, he may thus miss the Treasure for ever. In your Use of the Means, look beyond the Means, and cry for Almighty drawing Power, without which it is simply impossible you can make one Step towards *Shiloh*. God knows, you can do nothing this Way your self, and he does not expect it of you, that you should come to him in your own Strength ; nay, if you essay to do so, you but affront him, who is the
Strength

Strength of *Israel*; and ye disparage his Power, as if a Creature, far less a filthy sinful Creature, dead in Trespasses and Sins, would act independently of him. O then, cast yourself ay into his Almighty gathering Arms! crying, O Power, Power, Power of the Eternal Spirit of God, come! Cry for the powerful Conviction of the Spirit, whereby you may see how far off you are from God and Christ: They that are gathered to him, are made to see how far they are separate from him, and to say, Lord, I am lying in the Arms of the Devil, and I know not how soon I may be with him in Hell; O pity, pity of thy sovereign Mercy! Cry also for the powerful Illumination of the Spirit, that you may see a God in Christ; not an absolute God, sitting on the Throne of flaming Justice, but on the Mercy-seat, sprinkled with the Justice-satisfying Blood of the Lamb, from whence Mercy does vent it self, to the highest Honour, and greatest Glory of infinite Justice. Cry, in a Word, for the powerful Operation of the Spirit, the irresistible, efficacious Pull of his omnipotent Arm; O long for a Day of Power, a gathering Day! Many a black powerful Hindrance and Drawback you have: Every Lust lays upon the Matter, If I can get my Will, he shall never be gathered to *Shiloh*; the Devil says, If I can get my Will, he shall never win to Christ; the World, and the Cares of it, say the same, your graceless Neighbours and wicked Companions, say the same: There is a strong hellish Combination to hinder your coming to *Shiloh*. Yet nevertheless, tho' all the Intanglements of the World, all the Corruptions of the Heart, and all the Devils in Hell should join Counsel together to keep your Soul back from Christ, one Divine Draught of the Cord of Love will make them all to yield. These are potent Enemies, but here is an omnipotent God; they are Mighty, but he is Almighty. O cry, and continue to cry for this gathering Power! and tho' you have been long seeking an omnipotent Pull of Divine Grace, and to your Sense have not got it, yet, if you wait for it, and cry for it, it is a Thousand to One.

if you miss it: Nay, it cannot be, for he is a God of Judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for him, *Isa.* xxx. 18. Judgment here, is not Judgment in Opposition to Mercy, but Judgment in Opposition to Folly; that is, he is an infinitely wise God, that knows the best Time of coming and paying his Visit; and because he is a God of Judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him. He hath long waited for you. O wait for him in his own Way! And when he is stretching forth his Arms toward you in this Gospel, offering to gather you; let your Heart cry to him, saying, Lord, thou that gathers the Lambs with thine Arm, O do thou not only stretch forth thine Arms towards me, but clasp thine Arms about me; gather me, and I shall be gathered. If you be brought to this, I would hope the good Work were begun.

The *Third* Sort to whom I proposed to direct my Exhortation, was to Believers, that are gathered unto *Shiloh*. My Exhortation to you is, That, thro' Grace, you would gather more closely to *Shiloh*, than ever you have done, so as to be rooted in him and abide in him, *Col.* ii. 7. *John* xv. 5. O cry for more and more of his gathering Power and Grace, to bring you nearer and nearer to him: More particularly, (1.) Hath *Shiloh* come and gathered you to himself? Then O live upon him, for that is the End, for which you are gathered to him, *Gal.* ii. 20. that the Life you live may be a Life of Faith on the Son of God, who not only loved you, and gave himself for you, but gathered you also out of the stinking Grave of Sin and Misery, wherein you was. You need to live a Life of Dependence upon him; for all other Things may soon fail you, and nothing in all the World may be left you, but himself. But when the Spider's Web is swept down, yet you may see the House standing sure; even so, when the Cob-webs of Creature confidences fail, Faith will see a sure Foundation to lipen to, tho' the Fig-tree should not blossom, &c. You'll every Day need to be living on him; for as the Vessel that is full To day needs a new Filling To-morrow,

and the Stomach that seemed to be satisfied just now, within a few Hours, will be empty and craving again ; So here, your Vessel may soon be empty ; but tho' the Vessel be dry, the Fountain is not ; tho' the Vessel be empty, the Fountain is full ; and his Power to help ; is a creating Power, whereby he can command Nothing into a Being. (2.) Not only live on him but live with him : let it appear, that you're gathering out of the World, by your living above the World, in the Place where *Shiloh* is, Col. iii. 1. *If you be risen with Christ, seek the Things that are above, where Christ sits at the Right-hand of God.* O ! how unsuitable is it for them that are gathered to *Shiloh* in Heaven, not to have their Conversation in Heaven, like the Bird, they call the *Lapwing*, that hath a Crown upon her Head, and yet lives upon Excrements ? Hath the Lord crowned you with his Loving-Kindness, and yet you live upon the Dung of this World ? Hath he made you an Heir to a Kingdom, and yet you ly tumbling in the Ashes ? Surely the Believer, that does not live above the World, he lives below himself. (3.) are you gathered unto *Shiloh* ? Then, not only live on him, and live with him, but live to him. For this Cause also, did he gather you to him, that you might live to him, and to his Glory and Honour, 2 Cor. v. 15. *You are not to live to your selves, but to him that died for you, and rose again.* In him there is a Gathering of all Gifts, and Graces, and Fulness and all Mediatorial Offices, and Divine Qualifications, for your Use and Behoof ; and, to him, O Believer, should be the Gathering of all the Powers and Faculties of your Soul, that you may glorify and honour him ! O let the Gathering of your Desires and Delights be to him, who is the Desire of all Nations, and the Delight of all the Saints and Angels in Heaven ! Let the Gathering of your Thoughts and Meditations be to him, and the Meditation of his Name will be sweet. O let the Gathering of your Hearts and Affections be to him, for he is altogether lovely ! Let the Gathering of your Prayers and Praises be to him. Begging and Blessing

Blessing should go together ; for you'll have Occasion to beg from him as long as you're out of Heaven, and you'll have Reason to bleis him as long as you're out of Hell. Tho' you that are gathered to him have no Reason to fear Hell, *For there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ* ; yet you have ay Reason to bleis him, that you have escaped it. In a Word, let the Gathering of your Words and Actions be to him, so as you may put Honour upon him, before the World, by the whole Tenor of your Talk and Walk, that your Neighbours may take Notice of it, that you have been with Jesus, and that you are gathered to him : And let the Gathering of your Services and Sacrifice be to him, saying, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his Benefits towards me ?* O render your humble service to him, saying, *Truly I am thy Servant, thou hast loosed my Bands.* Render him the Love of your Hearts, the Calves of your Lips, and the Obedience of your Life. Thus you are to live to him. Again, (4.) Are you gathered to *Shiloh* ? O then, endeavour to gather others to him ! See if you can get all that are in your Family to come to *Shiloh* with you ; saying with *Joshua*, *As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord, whatever others do*, Josh. xxiv. 15. O have you been gathering to Christ ? And will you be careless tho' your Friends, your Children, be gathered to the Devil ? O hath Christ brought you to himself, and will he bring you to Glory, and gather you to Heaven ? And will you be easy, tho' all about you be gathered unto Hell ? No, no, that cannot be your Disposition, if you be a Believer indeed. If you be content in your Lifetime to serve him, you'll study to your Power, that Others may do the like. And, this is the Way to make the Love of Christ continue in the World ; for when you teach your Neighbours, your Servants, your Children, the Way of the Lord, they, following your Example, may teach their Children too ; and this will go from Generation to Generation, so as Generations to come may praise the Lord ; or at least, it will not fail on your Part. O how is

it to be regreted, that few come to Christ ! and of the few that come, how few do shew their Love, endeavouring to bring Others to him ? Therefore, O let this be amended, and endeavour, in the Place where you dwell, and the Station you're into, that by your holy Conversation, Others may be gathered unto *Shiloh* too. (5.) Are you gathered ? O let not Believers, that are gathered to *Shiloh*, forget their Gathering together for Christian-fellowship and Prayer, *Heb. x. 24, 25. Let us consider one another, to provoke unto Love, and to good Works ; not forsaking the Assembling your selves together, as the Manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.* The wicked that are to be gathered to the burning *Tophet*, are making Speed in sinful Ways, and gathering in Clubs and Cabals, to hearten and harden one another : And, O shall not the Godly gather together, to exhort and excite one another in the Way to Heaven ; as Iron sharpens Iron, so does the holy Gathering of Saints use to sharpen the Edge of their Spirits in the Lord's Way ; But since Fellowship-Meetings have been deserted, many Professors are blunted and rusted ; several Christian Societies are broken and evanisht, even at a Time, when they that fear the Lord should speak often one to another in Spiritual Conferences. O, if you be gathered unto *Shiloh*, let your Zeal for him appear, in restoring and reviving these Christian Gatherings in a regular Manner ; and pray, That the Devil's scattering Wind that he hath raised in our Day, for separating and dividing Ministers and Christians from one another, may be laid. (6.) To add no more, and to encourage you in the whole of your Christian Course, O you, that through Grace hath been gathered to *Shiloh*, take home with you the Comfort that belongs to your gathered State. As to these that are yet in a distant State, separate from the Lord Jesus, we have little Comfort to offer, if you abide there ; for in the Lord's Time you'll be gathered to the Grave, and after that, you'll be gathered before the Tribunal of God,

God, to receive the dreadful Sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed* ; and, in all Appearance, some here will be gathered before that awful Tribunal, before they be gathered together here again : We are not all to meet till we meet before the Fiery Bench of the Glorious Judge ; and if you be not gathered to him, as an amiable Jesus now, you must be gathered to him as a terrible Judge then. And, O that the Thoughts of this would excite poor Souls to think of gathering to *Shiloh* before they part, that they may part with God's Blessing, and not under his heavy Curse ! But, as to you that have been gathered unto Christ, I would have you know, that God allows you strong Consolation. You having fled for Refuge to the Hope set before you, you may rejoice in the Hope of the Glory of God, that the Joy of the Lord may be your Strength, in the whole of your Work and Warfare, as you go through the Wilderness. You may rejoice in this, that as your Hearts are gathered unto *Shiloh* now, so your happiest Gathering Time is but coming ; for he that hath begun to gather you as Stones for the Spiritual Building, will never leave the Work, till the Building be completed, with Shoutings of *Grace, grace* unto it. He will never give over gathering you, till you be completely happy : From Time to Time the Work will be advanced, by the Means of his Word and Ordinances, till the Consummation of the Work in Glory ; for he hath appointed a Gospel Ministry for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till they all come, *&c. Eph. iv. 14.* He hath appointed these three fearful Things, Death, Judgment, and Eternity, to be Three happy Gatherings for you ; the initial Gathering being over, by your getting in to Christ, after your progressive Gathering is come to a Close, in your having finished your Course, and fought the good Fight of Faith, your glorious and consummate Gathering will take Place : The Day of Death will be the glorious Commencement of it, and Eternity will be the everlasting

ation of it. The first Coming of *Shiloh* hath ashered in a gracious Gathering; his second Coming will produce a glorious Gathering; but of these gathering Seasons, I formerly spoke at large: I only say therefore, that then, O Believer, then shall you be for ever with the Lord; and it is for this Reason you are now gathered to him, that there you may be for ever with him: And so sure as you are gathered to him in Time, so sure shall you be with him through Eternity; not only for ever with the Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Apostles; not only for ever with Angels and Arch-Angels; not only for ever with Saints and Seraphims; but for ever with the Lord; for none of these can make a Heaven without him. Christ himself will be the Centre of the Assembly, and Heart of the Meeting. And tho' now you are but with him for a Start, and he is with you but for a Moment, and so your Communion with him is but in transient Glances of his Glory; may be just now you are with him in the Banqueting-House, but instantly you are, as it were, at the Back of the Door; It is only for a little, but then for ever: And it is but a little of him that you have for a little while; Yet then, O then shall you be for ever with the Lord, *Wherefore comfort one another with these Words, 1 Thes. iv. last.* Know, that being gathered to him on Earth, you shall be gathered to him in Heaven; and being gathered in Grace, you shall be gathered in Glory; for all the Promises of Grace and Glory are gathered in him, and you being gathered to him, are in him also, in whom all the Promises are *Yea and Amen.*

And, now this Gathering of the People here is to part; But, O happy Parting, to these who can date their first or farther Gathering to *Shiloh* from their Gathering to *Carnock*! For, part with whom you will, Christ and you shall never part again; whatever Clouds may be in your Sky, yet your Sun is risen, and will never set. But the most Part of you here were never yet gathered to *Shiloh*; and, O how can you ~~had~~ in your Heart to go away without him, and with-

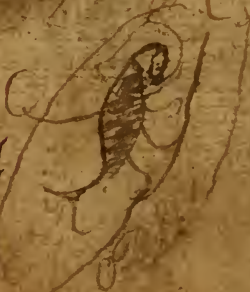
without so much as a Desire after him, who is the Desire of all Nations! For my own Part. I do not think of your going away in such a Case. O, shall he have it to say, I would have gathered you, as a Hen does her Chickens under her Wings, but you would not! O, wherefore did you gather to this Place, if you would not be gathered to *Shiloh*? And if you be more willing to be gone, than willing to be gathered, Wo is me, that my Text will be no more but a Witness against you upon *Carnock-Green*, that you would not? and, that the Devil, and the World, and your Lusts, were more desirable to you; and you had more Heart to be gathered to them, than to be gathered to *Shiloh*. O then, heartless Parting, while you are content to part with *Shiloh* for ever, rather than part with a base Lust, or a black Devil. If that be not your Choice, then let your Heart say, in the Sight of the Living God if you can, Lord, I think I would be gathered, and would rather choose to die upon the Spot than not to be gathered unto *Shiloh*; and, my Soul could wish, that all my dearest Lusts were buried in this Green, never to rise again, and that Christ might have my Heart for ever, in Room of them all. Why, Man, can you say that, to the Heart searching God? Then, poor Soul, let me desire you to take the first convenient Closet or Corner you can get, and there tell him this over again more solemnly; and, at the same Time, bleis him that ever *Shiloh* came to you, and that ever you felt the Vertue of this Promise, that *To him shall the gathering of the People be.*

FINIS.

George Gurney

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